

# THE LONDON READER

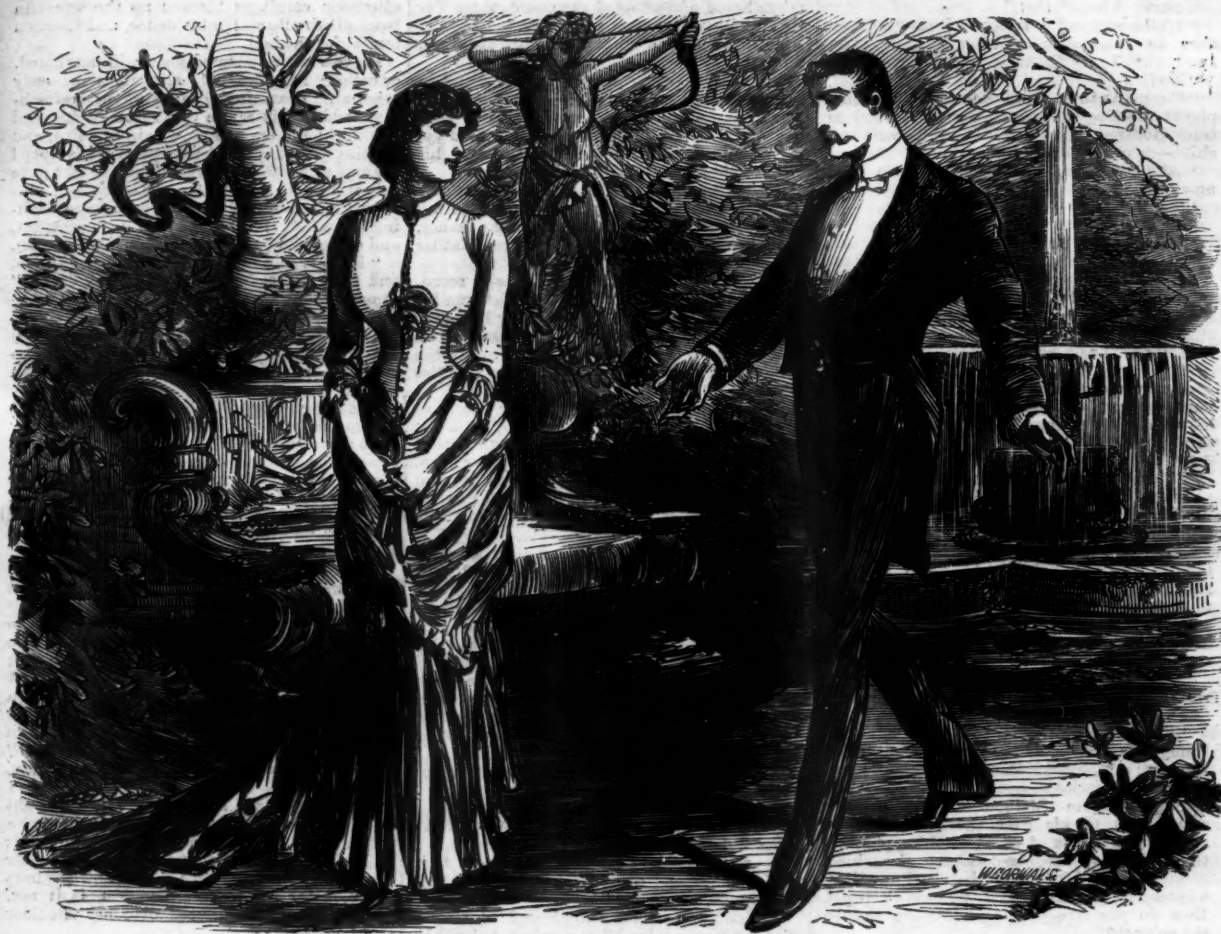
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FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 31, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["I WILL DO ANYTHING YOU ASK—ANYTHING YOU WISH—ONLY, ONLY SAY YES."]

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER.

—O—

### CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

"No! not exciting at all," returned Mary, holding out her work. "Where will you have the bows placed, miss? on the shoulder—one knot, like the fashion plate?"

"Yes; I leave it to you—you have capital taste, far better than Celèste. After all, Mary, love and sentiment is rubbish. I've come to that conclusion at last," said Miss Julia, with curious irrelevance. "Social duties are one's main interest; ambition is more satisfying, and holds out more tempting prizes than love. The great thing now is to know as many people as possible, to go everywhere, to be seen everywhere, to have a name for something—say it's lace, diamonds, horses, or dinners. I've not been long in society, and yet I've learnt that. Next month, when we go to London, I mean to carry all before me, and to take the great world literally by storm."

For three or four months Mary had not heard of, much less seen, her friend and tutor.

She had no means of writing to him, for she did not know his address.

She began to fear that he was dead, when, on returning home one night, she found a letter awaiting her, addressed in his well-known writing. It said,—

"MY DEAR MARY,—Meet me in the shell-house to-morrow at four o'clock.—H. M."

Four o'clock was the time the servants had their tea, and the hour suited Mary very well. She stole out rather timidly, and, skirting round all the shady walks, at last came running to the shell-house at the top of her speed and rather breathless.

"Mary, in a cap and apron!" was the salutation from Humpy, who was seated in his usual place.

"Yes; I'm Miss Darvall's sewing-maid now, and very glad to get such a good situation," she answered, calmly.

"Still, I don't like it. It's becoming enough in one way, Mary, but not in another. You know what I mean?" he added, significantly.

"No! I don't!" she retorted, angrily. "I consider that this cap and apron suit Mary Meadows very well. Leastways, the valet

says so," she added, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

"Don't say leastways, and don't talk to valets about your looks. Really Mary, after all my teaching, I'm astonished at you! Come, sit down."

"Oh! I can astonish you twice as much as that!" she said, sitting down beside him, leaning her elbows on the table, and looking into his face with a smile. "Now, pray where have you been the last three months? This is the end of April, and I have not seen you since poor father died."

"I've been up in the North, and I've been in London looking after money. It turns out that I am next-of-kin to a wealthy old coal man in Yorkshire. I mean a man who owned large shares in mines. His lawyers ferreted me out; they carried me here, they carried me there; registers were raked up, wills read, codicils read. The end of it all was that I find I am the owner of nearly four thousand a year!" nodding his head solemnly.

"You don't say so! I congratulate you with all my heart," she said, seizing his hand and shaking it up and down.

"What good is it all to me, Mary? My life is nearly spent—I'm nearly sixty-six. If it had come when I was younger I'd have ventured out into the world, and visited places I've pined to see. Maybe my money would have drawn away attention from my hump back," he concluded, with bitter cynicism.

"You think far too much of that," said Mary, soothingly. "You are not half thankful for what you also have, and that is—your brains. Providence made up to you there—you never think of that."

"Well—no; and I suppose I may reckon them as some compensation too. Do you know what I'm going to do with my money?"

"No!"

"I'm going to hunt up the real heirs to this place! I going to leave no stone unturned to track Godfrey Darvall, and Darvall's wife and child—or maybe children."

"And turn out Mr. Darvall that's here now?"

"Yes."

"But why?"

"Because I've no near kin of my own. All my life, or most of it, has been bound up with the real Darvalls. We are distantly related, too; oh! a long way off. I've loved for the name that seems foolish; all my stunted affections I have invested in Dane-ford Place. And the Darvalls—their prosperity is mine, their misfortune is mine, too. I suppose you could not understand this, Mary? but a withered old bachelor like me may have his eccentricities, may he not? Many people think I'm crazy."

"Oh, of course, you may do as you please. But I'm greatly afraid you will only waste your money!"

"I'll tell you if I do; I won't pridge it. I tell you more, Mary—this present man is no Darvall, in my opinion. He has not a single trait of the race. In figure, voice, gait, he resembles none of them. He has their vices, but that goes for nothing; they are common!"

"His claim has not a flaw," returned Mary. "There was not a doubt about it—all the papers were correct."

"Yes, those his agents stole out of the writing-room of course were correct. You and I saw that little robbery," snarled the old man.

"Yes, we saw people taking papers certainly, but they may have been sent by the lawyers; and, besides this, they brought home all Mr. Frederick's books and letters and belongings from Melbourne. There is a sword-stick of his over the smoking-room chimney, and lots of skins, photographs and things, that are recognized as having been his."

"Oh, yes! I know all that, and it will be a hard nut to crack, but I will crack it yet. How do you like your mistress—to change the subject?"

"I like her very well; she is good-tempered and kind, and never said a cross word to me in her life."

"Still she is no lady I should say."

"Maybe she is not. She has never been properly educated; she does not know even as much as I do—fancy that!"

"Well, you are not so very ignorant, after all."

"We are going to London in ten days for the season," said Mary. "I shall be glad to go, and see a bit of the world, even as it were out of the back door. I'm tired of Dane-ford!"

"Just like all your sex, you must have change, change, change!" said the old man, peevishly.

"Well, you can't accuse me of having had change, considering I've never been out of the place for twenty years!"

"Not since you were born, in fact."

"I was not born here. I don't know where I was born."

"The girl is raving! You were born in the West Lodge, and your name is Mary; your father was John Meadows, and you are maid to Miss Darvall. Can I help you to anything else?" he asked, ironically, "since your money is gone."

"Horace, I had something to tell you!

Before John Meadows died he told me something. I'm not his child—I'm no one's. I'm a foundling," and she leant her chin on her hands, and looked at him hard.

"John was raving, poor soul. You need not mind him, Mary; it's often the way at the last."

"He was as sensible and as collected as you are! He told me that he found a little bundle in the stove one evening, and he picked it up, and it cried. I cried; I was taken home and adopted then and there, for they had just lost their own baby."

"And there was no name, no bit of paper, no nothing?"

Mary shook her head, and put her hand in her pocket.

"Then you were just some love-child that one of the girls in the house wanted to get rid of, and foisted on honest John and his wife," said Humpty, with cruel frankness.

"I don't think so," retorted Mary, stoutly.

"Mrs. Meadows is my mother as far as my heart can go. John was to me as my father, but I believe in my soul that my real father and mother were gentlefolk."

"Oh, of course," and he laughed with scorn.

"Laugh as you like, I've been mistaken for a lady. Look at me!" taking off her cap.

"Look at my fine hair, look at my hands, look at my feet!" pushing it out from under the hem of her dress, "it's half the size of Miss Darvall's!"

"Well, I don't say that you may not have good blood in your veins on one side," said her companion, with a grim significance that brought the angry blood racing to her face.

"I always wondered where your air of breeding came from. I grant you that! That often puzzled me; I never could make it out."

"Do you think you could make this out—the only thing that was found on me?" she asked, suddenly putting her hand in her pocket. She added, "I brought this on purpose to show you," producing the ring.

Humpty took it up, glanced at it, and his whole appearance underwent an extraordinary change; he trembled all over, like a man who had the palsy. He closed his eyes, opened them again, then he leant his head on both his hands, and sat for fully five minutes without speaking.

"Well!" cried Mary at last, "what do you make of it?"

"If it's what I believe," he answered, in a low voice, without raising his head, "if it's what I hope, I will make your fortune, but you must hold your tongue, and have patience. You are Mary Meadows for many a day to come!"

"Won't you tell me something? Won't you give me even a clue?" she asked, feverishly, standing up and laying her hand on his shoulder.

"I cannot give you what I don't possess! I've only my thoughts, and they may come to nothing. Good-bye," hurriedly holding out his hand, "leave me, there's five o'clock; run, or you'll be missed!"

## CHAPTER X.

THE Darvall family went up to the great metropolis early in May, and installed themselves in a mansion in which we shall term "Upper Cream-street," Mayfair. Their carriages and horses, style of living, and staff of servants, made a small stir even in that superb locality; and the new heir to the Darvall name, acres, and hordes in the Three per Cents., soon found swarms of acquaintances flocking round him, like flies round a pot of honey.

It was wonderful to observe the number of people who recollected old Mr. Darvall, or whose fathers, brothers, or uncles had known him intimately, and who were so charmed to renew the acquaintance with another member of the family.

These delightful people were chiefly toothless, wigged old *roués*, impecunious branches

of titled families, heads of the families themselves, or dowagers with trains of marriageable daughters, who were keenly alive to the fact that Mr. Darvall was a widower, and that Mr. and Miss Darvall were likely to give dances, concerts, theatricals, etc.

The county had been a little backward in folding the new-comers to their bosoms. Town made up for this coldness a hundredfold. One acquaintance led to another. Julia's visiting list numbered hundreds; and every afternoon carriages blocked up the street in front of Mr. Darvall's residence, and footmen fought for the bell.

He was not considered *gauche*, ill-mannered, or called "Blue Beard." He was "deliciously original," charmingly independent, refreshingly odd! His figure was commanding and dignified; his expression was impressive, and nothing was said about his squint or his stoop! He was altogether a rough diamond, who gave inimitable dinners, wines of the richest vintages; whose daughter was a handsome, dashing young lady, with a fine fortune in prospect, and one of the best-dressed women in London.

"Papa is going to be noted for his dinners, and I'm going to be celebrated for my dress!" remarked Julia to her maid.

Mary was now promoted to be chief attendant on Miss Darvall—vice Celeste, resigned—and she had discarded caps, and was as smart a lady's maid as any one could wish to see.

She had plenty to do, for her mistress went out morning, noon, and night; and all her time at home was spent in dressing, trying on dresses, or holding interviews with milliners—interviews at which she, Mary, and the maids would look as grave and solemn as if it were a Cabinet Council.

Money was no object, but the dresses must be striking, and unlike any one else's.

After one of these long conferences, and as Mary was adorning her young lady for a grand *fit*, she said,—

"That white and gold brocade body and the little skirt dotted with gold butterflies will be a great success, Mary; it fits me like a glove; and, with a bouquet of crimson flowers, I shall look my very, very best! I want to turn out particularly well. I mean to conquer Captain Elliot! He is home. I've met him twice. I'm really rather pleased with him!"

"Are you, miss?" said Mary, rather grimly.

"Yes. He is much quieter, though, than I expected—not half such a rattle as I thought he would be. I fancy the Indian sun and a bullet in his shoulder have tamed him down; he has a bronzed face, and an interesting air that rather fascinates me. And now the next thing is for me to fascinate him, is it not, Mary?" and she glanced over her shoulder and laughed.

Mary was looking unusually grave. She was stringing beads, and all her mind seemed bent on the chase of these imitation pearls round a cardboard box at the needle's point.

"I believe he is a great admirer of beauty, miss!" she said, looking up at last. And certainly, to Mary's taste, her mistress was a pretty young woman; her figure sylph-like and graceful (thanks to her dressmaker), with her brilliant teeth, and complexion, and sunny locks.

Mary had not the smallest doubt in her mind that Maxwell Elliot would easily succumb to her charms. Her own feelings with regard to him had undergone such an extraordinary revulsion that she could not honestly say whether she would feel jealous or not—most likely not. He was now quite indifferent to her. She did not care if she never saw or heard of him again; and she scarcely realised the tie that bound their lives together. So far, the chains had not galled her.

Her time had been occupied so completely and engrossingly in trying to make both ends meet that she had no leisure to sit down and indulge in futile retrospection! What was done was done.

She liked her young mistress, who was good-tempered, generous (only Mary's pride revolted



against presents), and frank—if anything, too frank. She made confidences to Mary that Mary shrank from—not that they were guilty, in any shape or form, merely indiscreet. She showed her mind, her feelings, too nakedly to her, who, after all, was but her handmaiden and inferior; not in that handmaiden's own opinion, though. In her secret heart she felt herself above her employer, despite all her money and titled friends.

After all, what would Miss Darvall be without her fortune? It was merely that that set her above Mary Meadows. Mary had ten times more ladylike instincts than her mistress, Julia.

Julia revelled in outward show. If her dresses were magnificent, she was not equally grand in her ideas about less prominent parts of her costume. She was far less dainty about her petticoats and stockings than might have been supposed; far less particular than Mary, her maid, who noted this peculiarity somewhat scornfully. Also Miss Darvall's astonishing knowledge of queer, odd words and slang—also her extraordinary ignorance on many subjects—her vulgarity, if she might dare to think so!

Yes, she looked down on her patroness, and yet she liked her, and never spared time nor trouble on her behalf.

She had gradually worked up from housemaid to sewing-maid, sewing-maid to lady's-maid, and now she was more of a companion and confidante than anything else. She wrote Julia's orders, notes, and finally letters. She went out shopping with her, on foot, or in the carriage; and she was the recipient of all her confidences, and the repository of all her woes or her triumphs. The lack of an invitation to one great house, the sensation she created at another; the speeches that had been made to her, the spiteful things said behind her back, the sweet things whispered in her ear—were all retailed.

It came hard to Mary to listen to long confidences about Maxwell Eliot. Not that she cared for him, but she did care for Julia, and she was resolved not to stand long unmoved, and allow him to commit bigamy!

Bouquets, the size of small haystacks, were handed in with his card attached. Notes, in his hand, were not unfrequent, and he was a prominent man in the Darvall set—was always one of their guests at water-parties, race-parties, and picnics.

Captain Burn entered into everything, *con amore*, so did Julia; they were insatiable for amusement. But Mrs. Martin took her pleasures sadly, and Mr. Darvall almost morosely. He approved of races, though, and laid many bets; and his card parties had already achieved a name.

People whispered to one another that you could play as high as you liked at Darvall's, and that he had been known to lose three thousand at a sitting, without as much as winking!

Of course, he took a house near Windsor for the Ascot week—a charming country place, for which he paid a rent that charmed its needy-titled owner. And this beautiful seat he and his daughter filled from basement to garret with their own particular friends.

Fast young ladies, frisky matrons, smart young men, and eligible elderly bachelors, were among Julia's contingent; gamblers and blacklegs—of course of the most polished description and quite in society—were Mr. Darvall's reinforcement.

The company made a gay and goodly show, as they sat down to dinner at the "Priory," the day before the races. Captain Eliot was among the guests; and Mary saw him for the first time for two years, quite by chance, as he and a brother officer drove up to the entrance in a dog-cart, and she happened to be looking out of a window upstairs.

That evening he was the theme of Miss Darvall's discourse. She had been ruffled at seeing the set a certain Blanche Stuart was making at him, and delivered her gout-very freely to Mary, as she unlaced her gown.

"It was disgusting to see the way she behaved, and how she flattered him, and looked at him, and actually asked him to take her out for a walk in the pleasure-grounds in the moonlight!"

"And did they go?" inquired her attendant.

"Of course they went, and everyone else too, when they had it put into their heads; and then she insisted on playing billiards afterwards. I must say these English girls don't stick at much; she will propose for him before she has done."

"I don't think it will make much difference what she does," said Mary, thinking it was time to venture some kind of hint. "I don't believe that Captain Eliot will ever marry."

"What nonsense. A young man like him, and the owner of such a property! Of course he will marry, and he is looking out for a wife now! He is going to leave the service; it's preposterous for a man in the army to have so many thousand a year. He told me himself that he was going to retire and settle down at Carnfort. Pray what does that mean? Why should he settle without a wife?"

"It just means what he says, no more; but I'm sure he will never marry—quite sure," said Mary, doggedly.

"Why?"

"Oh, I can't give you a reason;" it was the last thing she was inclined to do, "but tell me, Miss Julia, candidly, do you really care for him?"

"As to really caring for any one of them, no! I've no more heart than a blind bat, but he would suit me better than others, although he is plain Captain Eliot; and yet he is not plain, he is very handsome. He is such a gentleman, and I—I fancy a man like that, Mary, for the way I was brought up I saw so few. We were a rough lot where we lived, near Melbourne. Then he sings! I never heard any one sing so well off the stage; his voice makes me feel quite—quite like crying, and gives me a lump in my throat and all that sort of thing, and he reads poetry so beautifully you can't think!"

Mary could imagine it all perfectly. Had he not read "Locksley Hall" and the "Gardener's Daughter" as he lay at her feet in the Daneford Woods?

"I'm going to give Blanche Stuart the slip for once. He and I have arranged to take a ramble to-morrow morning before breakfast; it's a shame to lie in bed after seven o'clock such heavenly weather as this, so mind you call me at half past-six with my tea, Mary; and I'll wear white cambric with the pink ribbons, and my rustic hat."

However, the next morning, in spite of her virtuous declaration about early rising, Miss Julia was not inclined to stir, when Mary stood beside her with a cup of tea, and a nice little piece of buttered toast, and reminded her of her previous orders.

"I won't get up!" she cried, fretfully. "I should be too done up for the races to-day; and then there's our dance to-night—never thought of that! No, I must have lots of sleep, or I shall look a perfect wreck. I suppose I must send him a note; bring my blotter here, and I'll scribble a line."

The blotter was brought, and the line scribbled; it was as follows:—

"DEAR CAPTAIN ELIOT,—I'm really too lazy to stir, so you must excuse me for once. I send this note to you by my pretty maid—the one I told you about. Mind you take a good look at her, and tell me what you think of her by-and-by.—Yours very sincerely,

"JULIA."

"Here, Mary," as she folded it up, "you take it down and give it to him. You will find him at the gate of the garden, or in the big fruit greenhouse."

"I take it, miss? Won't it do just as well to send it by the footman?" rejoined Mary, in dismay.

"Send my notes all over the place by a footman! No thank you, Mary. I have not

quite lost my senses! Run away with it at once. Don't keep him waiting, and, for goodness sake, don't bother me."

So saying, Miss Julia turned her face to the wall, and intimated that the subject was done with, and that she was going to sleep.

Mary went downstairs, irresolute what to do, but ere she reached the big entrance hall she made up her mind that she would take the note herself, and brazen it out. She and he must meet before long, when he went down to Carnfort, and the family returned after the season to The Place. She might as well get the first awkward edge of their encounter over at once; in short—now.

Captain Eliot had found it a horrible bore rising at half-past six, but how could he disappoint a lady who made the assignation with her own lips? He was not a scrap in love with Miss Darvall.

She was a lively, dashing, good-humoured girl, with a good skin, and fine teeth. He was asked very often to her father's house, and he went partly and principally because he had nothing better to do. It all came in the day's work—this round of the season—races, dances, dinners, theatres, breakfasts, weddings, luncheons, and "texas." When it was all over he would go down to Carnfort for the shooting; the shooting-time was prime—no coverts in the country better than his own.

But how was he to live with that female Murdecai, as it were, at his gates—that thorn in his flesh—his unacknowledged wife—the Gardener's Daughter!

What a fool he had been—what a fool! His conscience pricked him in behalf of her; he had behaved badly in that business from first to last. However, he had been completely cured of falling in love—the bird-child dreads the fire, and latterly he had given the fire, as representing the fair sex, a very wide berth indeed.

The ordinary civilities of society, and social amenities, that meant nothing (no, bouquets had no meaning nowadays), were the outside of his attentions to Miss Darvall or anyone else. He talked nonsense to her and others, but they knew very well, or ought to know, that it was nonsense. Besides, he must make it up with Mary.

He had been waiting three minutes at the gate—they seemed ten, and had passed on to the big greenhouse, cursing his folly for not making some ready excuse the previous evening.

He stood in the middle of the broad-tiled walk, and waited in angry impatience. At length he heard light footsteps coming along the gravel; he saw through the greenhouse door—which was red-stained glass—the figure of Miss Darvall at last!

The handle was turned, the door pushed back—and—and—could he believe his eyes? This was not Julia, but his wife, who was coming towards him with a letter in her hand!

## CHAPTER XI.

THERE WAS A MOMENT'S SILENCE, and then she said,—

"Captain Eliot, Miss Darvall desired me to give you this," tendering the note as she spoke. She looked pale, but pallor suited her; she never looked more lovely.

There was a noticeable interval before he could control his voice, and then he asked, in a rather choked voice,—

"What are you doing here?"

"I am Miss Darvall's maid," she returned, stiffly.

"Miss Darvall's maid!" he repeated, as he looked at her fixedly.

She returned his glance with pitiless scorn. Her heart was garrisoned by her sorely wounded pride, her sorely wounded confidence, and within the citadel, love long dead.

"Does Miss Darvall know who you are?" he asked, with an effort.

"Of course she knows; she took me from home. She knows that I am Mary Meadows."

"Is that all?" he asked, impressively. "That is all there is to know, Captain Eliot," standing and confronting him with a pale, determined face.

He looked at her, and then stretched out his hand with a sudden impulsive gesture, and said,—

"Mary Eliot! Two years ago I behaved to you in a way that I am ashamed of. I was a brute. I've often thought of that day in Caversham."

"Don't!" she interrupted sharply. "Don't remind me of what I wish to forget. Remember your own conditions, remember mine!"

She did not give him a chance of answering, for before he could realize it she was gone, the red glass door had been closed, and he was once more alone.

He made no attempt to follow her, but stood with his arms folded, and a kind of angry smile upon his face, partly in derision of himself; so madly decided his fate and his future in the gust of a storm of passion.

He had figuratively consigned himself to celibacy, and yet he was the husband of one of the loveliest girls in England. He had seen all the London beauties of the day, and there was not one of them fit to hold a candle to Miss Darvall's maid.

She had an air of distipation and breeding that put her mistress very much in the shade, and if she had been a pretty girl two years ago she was fifty times prettier now. There was no trace of her birth in her accent or her carriage; in fact, if he had been told that his recent messenger was a princess in disguise, he was quite open to conviction.

As he paced slowly up and down the garden his mind was entirely occupied with one problem, and that problem was—how he could reasonably eat his own words, and ride through his own conditions?

His wife was as presentable as any wife in Europe; and if she were of low birth what matter! Her face, if it had first seen the light in a cottage, was worthy to adorn a palace, and it should certainly adorn his home before he was very much older.

He found time at length to open Miss Darvall's scrawl. The idea of his wife being his hostess's maid, and carrying a *billet doux* to him, struck him as a curious anomaly.

"Take a good look at her and tell me what you think of her by-and-by." He read this sentence aloud, then tore the note into fragments, and scattered them angrily about the gravel.

The same afternoon, as he sat beside her in a drag at the races, the question was put to him point-blank by his hostess, who asked him airily, "What he thought of a certain person?"

"I admire her immensely," he answered, quietly; "so much, that I should like to see her a second time."

"Ah! I daresay, indeed; but I'm not going to allow you to turn her head."

"No fear of that!" he replied, somewhat scornfully.

"She knows you, I suppose; in fact, of course she does."

"How do you know?"

"Because I asked her."

"Oh! and what did she tell you?"

"Not much. She is not a talkative girl. She told me of one thing that amused me, though. She said she was *sure* you would not marry!"

"Marry!" he returned, bursting into harsh and bitter laughter. "I should not be surprised if I did not."

"And I should be surprised if you did not," returned Miss Darvall, putting a different inflexion on the words. "Here, we must not miss the race," she added; "remember, I have a dozen of gloves on Paradox with you! Let us give our minds to the great business of the day!"

Miss Darvall and her friends noted that the usually entertaining Captain Eliot was gloomy, preoccupied, and grave, and totally unlike himself. He was absent in mind, whatever he was in body, and at luncheon time when baskets were opened, and oorks were flying, he

was seen trying to carve a fowl with a fruit-knife, and he put a large helping of Mayonnaise sauce over a 'plateful of raspberry-tart—two eccentricities that subjected him to no end of chaff from the men, and loud inquiries, such as, "Who is she?" "Who was she, indeed! They little guessed."

That night Mr. and Miss Darvall gave a dance to their friends, not merely those under their own roof, but those staying in the neighbourhood.

The following night there was a servants' ball, into the arrangements for which Captain Burn—who, if the truth were told, was being made at his ease below stairs—threw all his energies *con amore*.

Of course, after dinner, when the fiddles struck up, all the dancing people upstairs eagerly descended, and sought the scene of action—a large, low, panelled room, that had seen better days before the house was modernized. It was tastefully lighted and decorated, and the floor had been conscientiously waxed. Everything promised a capital dance.

Mr. Darvall did not dance; so Captain Burn opened the ball with the buxom housekeeper. Miss Darvall danced with the butler. Captain Eliot would fain have led out the lady's maid, but a gallant hussar had been too sharp for him. Whilst he had been making up his mind and screwing up his courage she was gone.

He did not seek another partner, but leant with his arms folded against the wall, and contented himself with looking on.

Miss Julia had had the greatest difficulty to prevail on her Abigail to be present. First she pleaded "too much to do," then that she "could not dance," then that she "had a headache."

At last, Miss Darvall's suspicion was aroused, and she said,—

"You have some secret reason for staying away. Those are silly excuses. It is some one that you don't want to meet. Have any of the gentlemen been annoying you? Come now?"

"Oh, no, miss. Nothing of the kind."

"Then I shall expect to see you open the ball, Mary. You are the most important person, next to the housekeeper, and you will certainly be the 'belle.' You only wanted a little pressing to go. Was not that it?"

Mary danced the Lancers *vis-a-vis* to Miss Blanche Smart, and was the cynosure of every eye. When the set was over, her partner led her out down a cool stone passage in search of refreshments, which she declined. He detained her on one excuse or other till the fiddles and piano struck up a waltz, and then very reluctantly conducted her back to the ball-room. In the doorway they were confronted by various people, but specially by Captain Eliot, who said to Mary, in a rather eager tone,—

"Ah! May I have the pleasure of this?"

"Thank you, sir, I do not waltz," she returned, with chilling composure.

"Then, perhaps, you will allow me to sit it out with you?" he persisted. This request was even more embarrassing, but as there were a dozen listeners she could not abruptly decline, as she would certainly have done had they been alone. She would dissemble and walk away with him, and then make her escape.

Accordingly, she bowed her head, and took his arm without a word, and went away down the passage, but not into the refreshment room. He led her through a doorway straight out into the moonlit pleasure-ground.

When they had gone about twenty yards, and were concealed from sight of the house by a thick hedge of lauristinus, she removed her hand, and was about to turn back, but guessing her intention, he on his part laid his hand heavily on her arm, and detained her.

"Stay," he said. "I've been looking for this opportunity for the last two days. I have a great deal to say to you."

"Then I cannot imagine what it can be," she returned, endeavouring to free her arm; "but whatever it is, you can write."

"No, I can't. I will speak with you here, face to face."

"Against my will?" she asked, sarcastically. "Even against your will! Nothing I can say can be sufficiently abject for the way I treated you once."

"No, nothing," she returned, briefly.

"I was furious with my uncle, your father, you, and not with the real culprit—myself. I hope I am a better man than I was then."

"You might easily be that."

"Yes, and not be much, after all. I think it was that wound of mine that brought me round. When I was lying in that wretched little hill-tent, parched with thirst, and my very blood burnt dry with fever, with no one near me except one native dresser and a couple of sepoys, I used to say to myself,—

"Here I am, dying I believe, and not a soul belonging to me will be sorry. My uncle was gone—my father and mother I never remember. I have only some distant cousins, one of whom would be but naturally only too thankful to step into my shoes. As to lovers, I had had scores of a sort, affairs of a week or two, girls whose name I'd even forgotten, as doubtless they had mine. As I lay there, tossing from side to side, wishing at night that it was day, at day that it was night, the plain truth came home to me that I had not a soul belonging to me but *you*! And from you I could look for no mercy. My death would set you free; and once I was put away in my shallow grave in the sand. I would be speedily forgotten—save in the regiment they would say,— 'Oh! that was poor Eliot's horse, or that was a tiger skin poor Eliot shot, or he won that cup at such a race.'

"They would declare that I was a good fellow I know; but beyond them my life would drop out of the world, just as a stone drops into the sea and is never missed. Then, I began to say to myself that I'd been a selfish, careless, good-for-nothing cumber of the ground, and if I got well I would amend my ways. I expect," looking at his companion keenly, "that you are thinking of the little couplet,—

'When the Devil fell ill,  
The Devil a Saint would be:  
When the Devil got well,  
The Devil a Saint was he!'

"No, I was not," she answered calmly. "I was only wondering what was the good of all this talk. The past is done with, and all the words in the dictionary cannot cure it!"

"At least I will add a few more words," he replied, flushing hotly. "I came home quite well as you see me, and all my friends were very much more pleased than I expected; perhaps there are solid reasons for that, and I must not be too vain. I meant to go down to Carnport and look you up; but I went with the tide of the London season, and I put off what is not a very pleasant duty to anyone—least of all to a man like me—put off going to you and telling you what a villain I know I have been, and humbly asking you to forgive me."

"I never thought of you at all," she interrupted, "till you met me the other day, bearing you a little missive from a young lady! Is not that the truth?"

"Have it so if you like! You can hit pretty hard. Where—tell me one thing—have you learnt to speak so purely and so correctly? I heard you refused my uncle's offer. Who has been educating you?"

"A very accomplished teacher," she returned, calmly. "A gentleman of my acquaintance."

"A gentleman of your acquaintance!" he echoed, with a frown on his brow, and quite a different expression in his eyes. "I'm sure I am infinitely indebted to him."

"I really do not see why nor how it concerns you?"

"What is his name?" he asked, white with repressed feeling.

"His name is Horace."

"Mr. Horace, or Horace?"



"Horace is his Christian name, the other is a secret."

"And you call him by his Christian name?"

"Yes, and he calls me by mine!"

"There must be an end of this!" he exclaimed, sternly.

She laughed merrily for the first time—a laugh that maddened her hearer—and then she said,—

"There is an end of it; for, of course, since I am Miss Darvall's maid, I've had no time for study or improving my mind."

"Improving your mind!" he echoed, angrily.

"As to Miss Darvall, there must be an end of that too. You must give her notice—warning, whatever it is called; it is out of the question that you should continue in her service."

"And pray how am I to live? Who is to support my mother? All our money was lost in the Western Bank. She has nothing but what I earn!"

"All I have is yours."

"You are very good, but I would rather starve than even touch a penny of your fortune!"

"And so you mean to pass the rest of your life in the servants' hall—or brushing Miss Darvall's hair, and putting on her shoes?"

"No; Miss Darvall will marry, and go away from Daneford some day. I shall stay on then, if I can, and go back to my first post—housemaid. Miss Darvall had visions of marrying you. She likes you, and thought—"

"Did she impart these ideas to Mrs. Eliot?"

"She imparted these ideas to Mary Meadows, who, little as she cares for Captain Eliot, would not stand by and allow him to commit bigamy!"

"Much obliged to you, I'm sure," bowing quietly. "Then you will have nothing to say to me?"

"Nothing," she answered, and her eyes flashed fire.

"At least let me help you—I'll ask for nothing else—let me give you and your mother a comfortable home, and a decent income. I'll never trouble you in any way, and it will take a load off my conscience. Let me do this," he pleaded, passionately.

"Your conscience can bear a good deal. You made me marry you, and sacrifice my life, I may say, in order that you might keep that property. I was as one against four—mad with wounded pride—wounded, shall I say, love. I did not much care what became of me. Still I saw what a fate I was drifting towards, to be chained for life to one who did not want me, and I appealed to you to let me go free! You know your answer. You turned a deaf ear to me then. Money—many thousands—stood in the way of my freedom. I was, as it were, sold in your interest. To take a shilling of such gains now would be taking blood money—no more and no less!"

"And this is to be the end of it," he cried, hoarsely, his face working with uncontrollable emotion. "You stick to your station. You scorn my offer. Needless to add, and indeed I never expected more, you scorn me! Tell me, has that other fellow, has he ever offered you help? Did you talk of blood-money to him?"

"He once gave me ten pounds, for which I was most truly grateful," she answered, composedly.

"For which you were truly grateful!" he echoed, after a moment of incredulous silence. "Ten pounds! Good heavens! Madam, are you aware that you have my name and honour in your keeping?" There was an ominous look in his eyes as he spoke.

"Stop!" she cried, putting out her hands as if to ward off a blow. "Name!—no! I trample on your name as I do upon this gravel! Your name I never mean to wear! Honour! I only guard my own! As for yours, it's a poor, miserable, little plant—take care of it! How can you talk to me about your honour, when you remember that scene in the dining-room at Carnfort, when you assured your uncle, and my adopted father, that you had only been amusing yourself with me?"

"Your adopted father! What do you mean by that?"

"Just what I say. Lowly born, as I was, I had a name when you saw me last. Since then I find I am nobody's child!—a waif and a stray—that John Meadows found and brought home!"

"This, then, accounts for your pride, your spirit, the scorn you heap upon me. I wondered at various things—I wonder no longer!" he exclaimed, turning away with a gesture of fierce impatience. "You inherit these things from someone, the same as you inherited your high-bred face, your hands and feet, and hard heart. It often puzzled me when I thought of you and your plain-featured parents; you reminded me of a young swan in a village duckpond. I see everything now; and I see that there is no hope for me!"

"Why?" she asked, curiously.

"Because you belong to a race like myself. You have not the soft, yielding, forgiving nature that springs in the bosom of a peasant's daughter. The pride of whole legions of ancestors gazes out of your eyes. Even as you look at me now, if you had been the child of John and Mary Meadows you would have pardoned me. Yes, I'm sure you would. As it is, I believe that 'nobody's' daughter, as you call yourself, will. Oh, Mary!"—suddenly seizing her hand—"since you have no name, take mine—take me. Do not spoil both our lives. I will make up to you for the past, I swear! I will devote my whole life to you! We will go away. We will be married over again, if you like! I will do anything you ask—anything you wish. Your mother (I mean Mrs. Meadows) shall live with us. Only, only say yes!"

He was in earnest—terribly in earnest. With a sort of reckless abandonment, he seemed to cast himself and his future into her hands.

He was waiting for her answer, amid a dead silence only broken by the shivering of the adjacent leaves in the delicate evening breeze. By the brilliant moon the garden is as light as day.

He was waiting for her answer with breathless eagerness. He watched the changing expressions that flitted across her beautiful face.

Before she can say one word, good or bad, while yet she stands with her hands locked before her, looking back at him with the words which shall decide his fate and her own trembling on her lips, a loud, imperious voice calls out quite close to them (Miss Darvall's, who, with her partner, has strolled across the grass).—

"Mary! Mary! You don't mean to say that you and Captain Eliot are still in the garden! Captain Eliot, you must not monopolise Meadows!" Miss Julia was piqued. She rarely spoke of her handmaiden and confidante in these terms; but then she had been watching her, as she stood with head down-bent, with her partner at her side, in the attitude of one who was talking earnestly. "Mary, Jenkins, the second footman, has been looking for you everywhere, to dance a polka! You must not refuse him. I've promised it for you!"

To this announcement Mary gave a slight shrug of her shoulders, and, turning round, walked obediently away, and went, not to the ball, but straight up to her own room, from whence she did not reappear that evening.

"Now, Captain Eliot," said the heiress, "you can come and talk to me, for a change. Mr. Goring, go and dance!"—coolly dismissing her other companion with a gay little nod. "Now do tell me, Captain Eliot, what you could possibly find to say to my maid for the space of a whole half-hour!"

This was a poser; but her cavalier was a well-trained fencer, and extricated himself from the difficulty with ease, though he devoutly wished his fair questioner at Jericho before she had disturbed an important conversation that he now laughed off and called "nothing."

(To be continued.)

## BOUND NOT TO MARRY.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### FLORRY GETS INTO DIFFICULTY.

FLORRY TREFUSIS sits in the railway carriage with her back to the engine, her big black eyes fixed gloomily upon the uninteresting country, which seems, at the pace she is going, to be in mad haste to escape from her observation. But she does not see the trees and the fields, nor does she observe the browsing cattle and the contented sheep.

She is thinking of the days which have been so few, and yet that have held so much in them, that have elapsed since she came over this self-same iron road to the place from whence she now is being hurried away.

In this brief space of time she has met the man who, she assures herself, is her destiny; and she completely ignores the fact that his passionate desire is to win Eleanor Rosevear.

If Eleanor encouraged, or even accepted, Count di Talmino's attentions, Florry might not regard the Count as so exclusively her own property; but Miss Rosevear would plainly have nothing to do with him, and therefore Florry Trefusis felt that he naturally fell to her share.

As she sits here brooding, she comes to the conclusion that it will not be her interest, nor to her present comfort, to go with Eleanor any further than the Liverpool-street Railway Station.

It is quite evident, from the experience of last night and this morning, that if she lives with Miss Rosevear she must comply with the rules of the household, and must likewise conform to the usages of good society; and Florry hates to comply with rules, or to conform to anything that does not suit her caprices of the moment.

Florence Trefusis is not bad, but she is unconventional in the widest acceptance of the word; she is a Bohemian at heart, and would make her own caprice at the moment, the only law that should guide herself.

Such a girl cannot be influenced by reason, nor can she be won by affection. She is as erratic as the wind, as uncertain and variable as the weather, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred she comes to grief from sheer wilfulness, before she has finished her career.

As the train now bears her along she frames and dismisses many schemes, but at length decides upon one, the first condition of which is to get rid of her companions.

To do this, however, will not be quite easy, for she knows that Eleanor will not like to part with her unless she sees her on her way to her father's house.

They have reached the outskirts of London, and the train is slackening speed, when Florry startles her companions by saying,—

"I mean to go home to my father, Nellie. I haven't written to him, so if I get home before he and his wife arrive he will know nothing about my coming away; and if he does hear of it I don't care! The more I think of the matter the more foolish it seems, to cut off my nose to spoil my face—or, in other words, to leave my father and his wife to themselves. They must provide for me, and I've no doubt they'll soon be glad to do so!"

"You and your stepmother might possibly become good friends!" returns Eleanor, kindly.

She is by no means sorry to let Florry go home, and she thinks it not improbable that, with a little good feeling all round, Captain Trefusis, with his wife and daughter, may all three live happily under one roof.

"That will not be possible!" retorts Florry, angrily; "but my father will have to make me an allowance. I daresay you will see me again soon; but I shall go straight home now!"

"Very well, dear; do as you think best," responds Eleanor. "But how will you go? Do you know how the trains run?"

"Not exactly," is the answer, uttered in a

careless tone; "but I can easily find out. I came to you alone, and I can go back alone; you need not trouble yourself about me!"

"It will be no trouble," asserts Eleanor, kindly, "and I certainly shall not leave you until you are safe in your train."

"I call that preposterous!" exclaims Florry, in real anger. "As though I were not capable of taking care of myself! At this time of the day there are plenty of trains that will suit me. I shall take a cab from Liverpool-street to Waterloo Station, and I shall do capitably; so you need not concern yourself any more about my safety."

"I shall be very uneasy about you if Mrs. Pritchard or I do not see you off," protests Eleanor.

But she is conscious of saying this in a feeble manner. Florry is so headstrong and so wilful in even the most trivial matters that it seems a waste of power to contend with her, and it is a clear saving of time and of temper to let her have her own way at first instead of last, because she is sure ultimately to get it.

"What rubbish! As though I couldn't take care of myself anywhere!" is the disdainful answer. "Pray don't trouble yourself about me; I am all right! By the way, where will a letter find you?"

"I am not quite sure," returns Miss Rosevear, "because I don't know the address of the house that Mr. Merton has taken for me; but you can send a letter addressed to me in his care. It will be sure to be forwarded."

"And what is his address?" asks Florry, in a matter-of-fact tone, as though her right to take care of herself were vindicated.

Eleanor gave it, the wilful woman made a note of it in her pocket-book, and then the matter seemed to be settled, and when they reached Liverpool-street Miss Trefusis went to look after her own luggage and have it separated from that of her companions.

"Would you like my maid to go home with you?" asks Eleanor, as a last effort to protect her friend. "I will spare her for a day or two with pleasure."

But Florry only laughed derisively as she replied,—

"What should I do with a maid? She would be more bother to me than all my money; more bother even than the want of it. No. Good-bye, good-bye, Mrs. Pritchard!"

Her luggage meanwhile had been placed on a four-wheeled cab, and she now entered it, gave the order Waterloo Station, and waved her hand to her friends just as Mr. Merton joined them.

Florry Trefusis went to Waterloo Station, placed her luggage in the cloak room, then, feeling sure that by this time the coast would be clear, she took an omnibus and returned to Liverpool-street Railway Station.

Miss Rosevear and her party had disappeared, but the next train from Harwich would not arrive for another hour, and Florry scarcely knew what to do with herself in the interval.

She was hungry, but she was likewise economical, and she had been in so great a hurry to get away from Eleanor that she had not thought of borrowing a few pounds from her, as she otherwise would have done.

So now she contented herself with eating a couple of buns, then began to pace the platform, exercising meanwhile the small stock of patience she possessed.

She was not very sure about the trains, and she was still less sure that Count di Talmino would come in one of them, but she thought it more than likely that he would be in the one that had just arrived. The passengers were many, and she was wondering what excuse she should make for her presence here alone, if he did come, when a hand grasped her shoulder and Talmino's voice sounded on her ears.

"Ah! I have found you! I said I would find you, but where are the others?"

"Oh, Count, this is delightful!" she cries, giving him her hand, while she trembles with

emotion, and her breath comes quickly and in gasps.

"Yes, yes, I am glad to catch you, but where are the others? Where is Miss Rosevear?" he demands.

"I—I don't know, I have lost her," is the answer.

"Lost her!" he repeats in amazement. "How did you do that? How did she lose you? And where was she to go?"

"I don't know—I don't know at all," is the nervous, though unblinking answer. "Eleanor was to have met a lawyer who had taken a house for her, and while they were talking, as I was very hungry, I went to the refreshment-room and ate a bun, and when I came out again they were gone."

"But where can they be gone? Where is their luggage?" asks the Count, in dismay.

"They have taken it with them—I inquired," she says, hastily. "It is of no use asking any more questions. I have waited here till I am very tired, hoping they would come to seek me!"

"What shall you do if they do not come?" asks the Count in dismay. He is perplexed at having this girl thrown upon his hands in this fashion.

He is not in love with Florry. She does not interest, and but rarely amuses him. He is madly, desperately, over head and ears in love with Eleanor, and for her sake he would do any little service for her friend, though he would be very careful not to compromise himself in the eyes of his fair lady by being too attentive to Florry.

With some natures a little jealousy is a spur to love, but then the jealousy must exist, or must be created, and Eleanor Rosevear could never, under any possible condition of circumstances, be made to feel jealous of Florry Trefusis.

"I suppose if Eleanor does not meet me I shall have to go home," says Florry, in a dejected tone.

"Oh, yes, of course," assents the Count, his face brightening at the prospect of being able to get rid of her; "you can go home. Which way do you go?"

"I can go by Waterloo or Paddington," she replies coldly, feeling mortified by his tone and manner; "but I need not trouble you to go with me."

"No, but I will put you in a cab," he says, cheerfully; "and you will, perhaps, tell me where Miss Rosevear is going?"

"I can't tell you what I don't know," she answers, her voice sounding low, and she herself seeming to droop, "but I am so exhausted, I think I must sit down."

"Dear, dear, what a nuisance; that comes of eating buns," exclaims the Count, impatiently; "and I have not had luncheon myself; let us go into the dining-room and get something to eat."

And he slightly led the way, Florry following him, and thinking angrily that he might have had the civility to offer her his arm. But Count di Talmino was in the uncomfortable position of feeling that he was watched, and that he might be misunderstood.

Self-conscious to a painful extent, and unable to realise the possibility—nay, probability—that the world at large regarded him as one unit, not to be distinguished from the other units that make up the millions who inhabit the globe, he was at all times thinking that curious eyes were upon him, and he made himself singular, in his very desire to escape observation.

Now he was sure—as sure as anyone could be—that some one who knew him, or who knew Florry, was watching them; and his composure was at length completely upset by meeting the eyes of Mr. Hughes, who by a mere coincidence was eating a late luncheon while waiting for a train to Harwich.

Mr. Hughes meant to run down to Dovercourt to see Eleanor; and having a full hour to wait for a train was getting over the time by preparing against the chance of not having his regular dinner.

His surprise, therefore, was great, on seeing the Italian Count enter the same room with the artist-girl, in whose genuineness he did not quite believe.

They were neither of them friends of his. They were, in fact, mere acquaintances, and he had no desire to attract their attention, believing, as he naturally did, that they were here by appointment.

He went on eating his dinner, therefore, keeping his face averted as much as possible from the couple, and seeming to be absorbed in a comic paper, but even in this position he could not help noting that the Italian's manner to the young lady was anything but lover-like.

The Count's restlessness, also, was enough to fidget anybody near him; and Hughes, finding the time slipping by, signalled to the waiter, to bring him his bill, and just then Talmino turned suddenly, caught his eye and recognised him.

Hughes made no sign. In his heart he considered himself the equal of any peer, English or Italian, and he had not the least desire to continue the acquaintance of the couple seated near him.

Di Talmino flushed crimson, but he felt that the opportunity of explaining his presence here must not be lost; he thought it probable, also, that his rival for Eleanor's favour knew what had become of that young lady; and, quickly recovering his self-possession, he rose and approached Hughes, with whom, in his excitement, he would have shaken hands, if the latter had shown any inclination for such a salutation.

Hughes wore his proudest and most reserved air. He distinctly disliked the Italian, and he had no hesitation in showing it.

So he returned the Count's exclamation, "How do you do, my dear fellow?" by an almost stony stare, as he replied curtly,—

"I am quite well, thank you."

Under other circumstances, Talmino would have been repulsed and have turned away with a nod and a shrug of the shoulders at the Englishman's churlishness, but he was too anxious to ask questions to be silenced by a trifle, and he asked eagerly,—

"Have you seen Miss Rosevear? We have lost her."

"Miss Rosevear!" echoes Hughes, in amazement, but careful at the same time to utter the name in a low tone; "is she not still at Dovercourt?"

"No, she left this morning for good. Miss Trefusis came with her. Will you not come and speak to the young lady?"

Hughes rose, and if he had previously doubted the strength of his love for Eleanor, the overwhelming anxiety that seized him now convinced him of it.

Poor Florry! If she could have sunk through the floor, and have disappeared from mortal sight for a few days, she would have been only too thankful to do so, for if there was one man above all others whom she would have wished to avoid at this moment, it was Mr. Hughes.

"Oh! what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practise to deceive."

Florry had begun by deceiving Eleanor as to her reason for leaving her so abruptly; then she had deceived the Count as to the manner in which she had parted with Miss Rosevear; and now she must add to the deception by telling the same story over again, probably with additions, to the one man whom she felt assured would sooner or later detect the falsehood.

She had gained nothing but mortification by her foolish conduct, and now tears filled her eyes and rolled down her cheeks at the humiliation that in her own mind she was suffering.

Contrary to her expectation, Mr. Hughes did not add to her distress.

His manner—reserved almost to rudeness where the Count was concerned—was respectful and sympathetic enough to herself, and



though she did not admire him as she admired the Italian, she felt that she could trust him not to speak lightly of her.

She was therefore more communicative than she had been to di Talmio, and she described how Miss Rosevear had suddenly made up her mind on the previous evening to come to London by the earliest train, and had left Dovercourt for good, not exactly knowing whither she was going.

Substantially, she told the same tale about missing Eleanor as she had told the Count, for the Count was standing by; but she added that Eleanor knew she had decided to return to her father's house, and therefore possibly thought she had really gone. About the latter part of her story she was as vague as she very well could be, and both of the young men were too anxious to know what had become of Eleanor to trouble themselves much about Florry.

Hughes was less put out by this sudden move on Miss Rosevear's part than was the Italian, for he felt very certain that sooner or later he and Eleanor again must meet, and as there was no longer any reason for his going to Dovercourt he said so frankly, and asked Miss Trefusis if he could help her in any way with regard to the rest of her journey.

"Oh, thank you; if you will put me in a cab and tell the man to take me to Waterloo Station I shall be all right, and need not trouble Count di Talmio any further," she answers, gratefully, though with a feeling of resentment towards the Italian.

And when the Englishman asks if she would like him to accompany her and see her in her train she declines, graciously saying she knows her way quite well.

"I have made a more dignified retreat than I at one moment thought possible," she mused, with a sigh, as the cab carried her on her way; "but the Count was in the vilest of humours. I wonder if he thought it dangerous to be too civil to me?"

As the cab in which Florry was seated drove away, di Talmio laughed as though he saw some very good joke, and remarked complacently,—

"Ah, she wanted me to go with her, you see. Thank you, my dear fellow; you have helped me out of what you do call a scrape."

A look of contempt was the only answer that Hughes condescended to give to the boaster, as he turned on his heel, thinking bitterly that the Italian would next be boasting that he had found favour in Eleanor's eyes.

The Count's remark, however, made him resolved not to betray, even to Eleanor herself, the fact that he had met Florry Trefusis.

## CHAPTER XII.

### HUGH DARREL AT HOME.

On leaving the Count thus abruptly Jack Hughes made his way to his club on the Embankment, under the shadow of the clock tower at Westminster.

He was disappointed, for he had meant to go down to Dovercourt for a couple of days.

Circumstances had occurred that made him anxious to talk with Eleanor, and ascertain her views with regard to matters about which he could not write, and he was likewise looking forward to the pleasure of spending a couple of days near her.

What might have been said in these two days, and how greatly they might influence the future, he would not pause to think; nay, he tried to put all thought of consequences behind him, to live in the present, and take no heed of anything beyond.

And now all his pleasant anticipations are knocked on the head, and he can only congratulate himself upon not having had a long journey in vain.

He enters the club, walks into the smoking-room, and having provided himself with a magazine, sits down ostensibly to smoke and read, but in reality to think.

First of all he wonders what has brought Eleanor to town so suddenly; but he has no doubt that she will write to him in answer to his letter, and therefore he does not trouble himself about her change of residence. The pleasure of meeting her is only delayed, and perhaps it is just as well for both of them that it is so.

What perplexed him now was what he should do with himself.

He had arranged to get away from London for a couple of days at least; and having given himself this holiday, he had no inclination to go back to his dingy rooms in the Temple.

"I'll go down and see my mother," he decides at length; "she has been looking for me for some time; and it will be well for me to accustom her to the idea of what may possibly take place. She will be greatly put out, I know; but it is too much to expect me to marry a wife of my mother's selection, or to remain unmarried because of her prejudices!"

He comes to this conclusion gradually; but, although he is fond of his mother, the prospect of meeting her is not one of unalloyed pleasure.

No one knows better than himself how sweet and loving his mother can be, nor how indulgent she has been to him, her only child. But he is likewise aware that there is a reverse to the medal; that his mother has always tried to make her will the law that should guide him, and that the few occasions upon which they have had any serious difference has been when he has, metaphorically, taken the bit between his own teeth.

Sons who have been accustomed to go their own way, and follow their own inclinations, can scarcely understand how he shrank from taking any decided step in life that would meet with his mother's opposition.

Yet he did so shrink; and he did not actually make up his mind to tell his mother of his love, and of his half-formed intention of marrying, unless he found her in an unusually sympathetic mood.

"It will be best for all of us if she can only make up her mind to it," he reflects, later on, when he is in the train that is taking him down to Sussex. "I am sure she will love Eleanor when she knows her; I am almost sorry they have never met, because then my mother's prejudice against her must have been overcome!"

So he tries to persuade himself; but he knows that his mother's prejudices are rarely, if ever, overcome, and that the knowledge that he intends to propose to Eleanor Rosevear will upset a little scheme of her own that is too transparent to be misunderstood.

It is principally in consequence of this scheme that his visits to his mother's house are so rare and of such short duration; but now he feels that he is safe, and that his parent will soon understand how useless are her matrimonial plans on his behalf.

By the time he reaches Dorking daylight has nearly departed, and a soft summer rain is falling, cooling the earth and bringing forth faint perfumes from thirsty plants and dusty trees.

His mother's house lies five miles from the town, and if he were not hampered with a valise he would like to walk the distance, so fresh and beautiful does the country seem; but with even a small quantity of luggage this is impracticable, and he gets into an open fly and is driven along the country lanes, enjoying the calm evening, and quite indifferent to the rain.

The house before which the fly pulls up at last is a red-brick building, more pretensions than a villa, yet not of sufficient size to be called a mansion.

It is detached, standing in its own grounds, and is known by the name of "Witherleigh," which was the maiden name of the lady who owns it.

Lights are in the hall and in the drawing-room, and Hughes knows that his mother is at home, though she cannot be expecting him.

Five minutes afterwards he is in her arms, from whence he is released to shake hands with a younger lady who is likewise in the room.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," says the mother, affectionately. "Have you dined? But of course you have not, and I am sure you must be hungry!" and she leaves the room to give certain orders for his comfort.

Her son follows her, making some excuse about having to change his clothes, which are damp from riding in the rain, and Inez Woodfall is left in the drawing-room alone.

There is no want of courtesy in this, for Witherleigh is Miss Woodfall's home. She is an heiress, is under the guardianship of Hugh Darrel's mother, and is distantly connected with that lady's family.

Yes, that is the secret which Jack Hughes will one day have to tell Eleanor Rosevear; his real name is John Hugh Darrel, he is the nephew of the late Miss Darrel of Darrel Court, Cornwall, and he and his mother believe that he is the rightful owner of that mansion and estate.

He is likewise Eleanor's heir, it being out of her power to leave anything, save the few hundreds she may save out of her income, to any other person.

This secret—which the intelligent reader must have already guessed—was what made it seem like the very irony of fate, that compelled Hugh Darrel to peril his own life, to save that of the woman who stood between him and a handsome fortune. It will likewise explain how he had at first tried to avoid Eleanor, knowing as he did, that his mother's anger would be great if she heard that they were even upon terms of ordinary friendship.

Love had been too strong for him. That meeting at Ipswich had swept down his prudence and his prejudices, while the presence of the Count di Talmio had established a sort of bond between himself and Eleanor, which only the presence of an importunate rival could have so soon created.

Perhaps he underrated the difficulties which Eleanor might raise when he proposed to her, from the fact that he was too well aware how earnestly his late aunt had desired such a union to take place; and his mother's persistent opposition to it had naturally made it seem to him and to her, that it was his reluctance that had to be overcome, and that Eleanor's consent could be taken for granted.

A man like Hugh Darrel, an only son, heir to an old name and a large fortune, is very apt to be spoilt, when his aunt wants to marry him to one girl, his mother to another, and he has no inclination to oblige either of his relatives. It was, indeed, only our hero's natural chivalry towards all women, old or young, rich or poor, ugly or beautiful, that saved him from being an insufferable coxcomb.

He has changed his clothes by the time he returns to the drawing-room, and he looks quite a different man, in his black coat and white shirt front, from the carelessly-dressed artist, who came home so unexpectedly.

Inez Woodfall is sitting where he left her; she is embroidering a piece of cloth with coloured silks, and she looks quiet and homely, like a woman whose sphere in the world is not large, and who will never make any effort to extend it.

She is not pretty. She is dark and sallow; she has good teeth and her brown black hair is banded smoothly away from her face, helping to give that look of primness which is so exceedingly unpleasant to the artistic mind.

When Hugh approaches her she looks up with a smile, and a faint colour steals into her sallow cheeks, but she does not volunteer any remark; and he, seating himself on the opposite side of the table, asks carelessly,—

"How have you and my mother been getting on while I have been away?"

"Quite well, thank you," is the response. "We have been very busy; we are going to have a large bazaar here next Tuesday in aid of the fund that is being raised to build a new

tower to the church. I am working this for it!" and she holds up the piece of cloth for inspection. "I am so glad you will be here!" she continues; "your mother was saying only this morning that she should try to persuade you to come."

"Going to have a bazaar here next Tuesday?" repeats Hugh, in amazement. "You don't surely mean to say that my mother is going to turn her house and grounds into a bear-garden?"

"Not exactly!" here interposes Mrs. Darrel, who joins them at this moment, "but we are going to have a bazaar in the garden; there cannot be much damage done. A couple of large marquees will be erected on the lawn, and the company is sure to be select, for admission will only be by ticket. I admit that I hesitated at first, but I was so pressed on the matter, and Inez seemed to have set her heart upon it, so I at last consented."

Hugh shrugs his shoulders, but makes no comment. The place is his mother's—not his; and she, of course, can do as she likes, but he does not think more highly of Inez for having persuaded her to make such a concession.

Both of the ladies feel that he does not approve of the arrangement; but, fortunately, at that moment a servant announces that dinner is served, and Hugh goes into the dining-room, followed by his mother, who seems to think that he will not make a satisfactory meal if left alone.

He is glad to have her to himself, for there is great and sincere affection between mother and son, and his visits to her would be much more frequent if she lived alone.

With his mother he is at ease and thoroughly at home.

She is aware that when he travels about the country, painting, he is known as Mr. Jack Hughes, and she approves of his dropping his surname, for she considers it *infra dig.* for a Darrel to paint for money; and she would gladly give the greater portion of all she possesses if her son would live with her, or would adopt—to her mind—some more dignified career.

In point of fact, Hugh has been called to the English Bar, but he has never held a brief, and is never likely to do so; he resembles his mother in being headstrong and fond of having his own way, and the disappointment he experienced when old Miss Darrel died, and it was found she had left all her money to Eleanor Rosevear, with remainder to himself, had so upset him, that he gave himself to art and to the enjoyment of the hour, resolved not to trouble himself about the future.

Had he been quite dependent upon his brush he might not have found this so easy as he desired, but he was possessed of three hundred a-year of his own, and this, made him to a certain extent independent of the world.

"You are looking very well, Hugh?" says his mother, gazing at him fondly; "what have you been doing with yourself of late?"

"A good many things that I am afraid you will not approve of," he answers, with a provoking smile.

She looks at him quickly, and her fine handsome face sets for a moment, and the hard lines come out upon it, but she recovers herself in a second or two. Hugh is no longer a child, but a man with an absolute right to act and think for himself, and she dreads lest she may say anything that will drive him away from her or seal up his confidence. So with an effort she chases the frown from her brow, smiles, and says gently,—

"Why should I not approve of anything you do? I am sure you could not act in any way but as an honourable man and a gentleman."

"Well, you shall judge for yourself while I make a clean breast of it," returns her son with a laugh. "To cut the story short, I nearly lost my life by rescuing a young lady from drowning, and then—"

He pauses purposely, lest his mother shall

think he is talking too lightly to have any deep feeling in the matter.

"And then?" she repeats nervously, fearing she scarce knows what.

"And then I lost my heart to her," he continues, and he drinks off a glass of Burgundy as he speaks.

His mother gasps. This, in some form or other is what she has dreaded, and something in her son's voice tells her that opposition on her part will be useless.

"Is that all?" she asks at length.

"All!" he repeats, surprised in his turn; "don't you think it is enough? To me it appears a very serious matter."

"Yes, no doubt it is serious," she answers, calmly, "but that is not exactly what I meant. Who is the lady, and have you proposed to her?"

He laughs and shakes his head as he replies,—

"I have told you all I am going to tell you to-night, mother; but I will show you the lady's portrait if you like."

(To be continued.)

## TRIXY'S LOVER.

—O—

SHE was only a fair young creature, slender and sun-browned, with hazel eyes, and hair just of that burnished tint which Raphael loved so.

He was a pale-faced youth, with haughty lips and calm, azure eyes, in the steadfast gaze of which one read the giant pride and strong ambition that would sway the man in years to come—a handsome, forceful youth, perhaps a trifle selfish, perhaps a thought too lordly in bearing for all to like him.

He was the heir to boundless wealth, broad lands, an only child, ever fondly cherished, ever taught that the blood in his young veins was the blood of heroes and statesmen; so, if Gerald Elden was very proud, who will wonder?

And yet he found her very sweet and fair, notwithstanding the fact of her being a poor rector's daughter, her only dower that fresh, sweet face, her only pride the single parent left her, her only ambition to do any good that she found waiting to be done, and avoid all evil.

The rector of a small country district, Mr. Lane, finding his income too small, took occasionally a youth whom he prepared for college; and that is how these two met—the rector's daughter and the heir of the Eldens.

For six months the young man pursued his studies of Latin and Greek under the rector, growing bronzed and strong in the clear air of the country. Then, in the autumn, he left the rectory; but not without having awakened the young heart of Elsinore Lane, and taught it the lesson of a first, idolatrous love.

"You will be true to me, sweetheart?" he whispered, as they were parting. "I will come back for you some day. You will be true?"

"I will be true," she faltered, her sweet face white as death. "Whenever you come you will find me waiting."

"I know it, my dearest; and you will not doubt me? You will know that, once my own master, I will hasten here to claim your promise?"

"I will know it," she said, in a low voice. "Should I think otherwise for an hour, I would die. You could not forget, Gerald—greatly as we are divided by difference of birth, you will not forget—you will love me always best?"

"Best and only!" was his answer.

And then, with clinging embraces and sincerest regret on both sides, they parted.

She heard from him regularly for a year. His long, tender letters were life to her for one long year of hope; then suddenly they grew brief and infrequent, and at last came no

more; and the sun of her existence shone for Elsinore Lane no longer.

It was two years after that tender parting between Gerald and Elsinore that a stroke of paralysis laid the rector helpless on his couch. Six months later, the old man died, and his daughter, then twenty years of age, was left alone in a world of which she knew so very little.

Does not Heaven temper the wind to the shorn lamb? Heaven raised a friend for the delicate young orphan in her hour of need; and the man who was appointed to fill her father's place obtained a position for her as governess in a family in a distant city.

Young as she was, she had been carefully taught, and her employers were delighted with her. The little children given to her care learned to love her fondly; and but for that never-dying love in her heart, that passionate yearning for a sight of her false lover's face, she might have been perfectly content with her lot.

Besides the little creatures who were taught by her, there was a fair daughter of the house—a beautiful, stately, blue-eyed girl, sweet and pure as day-dawn—and her name was Beatrice Arden.

She was betrothed, Elsinore knew, but her lover was not to claim her for a year; and while that year passed, it chanced that the governess never saw him, nor was his name spoken of in her presence; "Trixy's lover," the children always called him.

Once, when he spent a month with the Ardens, Elsinore and the little ones were away at a farmhouse among the hills, where they had been sent, because tiny May was not strong; when they returned Mrs. Arden and Beatrice had gone to stop some weeks beside a picturesque lake, and in the party which they joined, there was "Trixy's lover."

In the autumn they returned, and preparations were made for the bridal, which would take place in November.

"I am so happy!" Beatrice said once to Elsinore. "I do not think there is a happier girl in the whole world than I. You should see my prince, Miss Lane, and then you will not wonder that I have made an idol of him. He is so true and noble! I know that in his whole life he has spoken no single false word, cared for no one but me, and my heart is almost heavy with its weight of joy."

And Elsinore bent her face to hide the bitter drops that sprang to her eyes, while a prayer arose from her heart to Heaven that Beatrice Arden might keep her love and faith, not lose them from her life, as she had lost hers.

Then came the day of the wedding. "Trixy's lover" had come for his bride, and Beatrice, with a new solemnity on her beautiful face, a new steadfastness in her blue eyes, surveyed her white-robed loveliness in a mirror.

"Will I ever be less happy, do you think?" she asked Elsinore, who was fastening the silken veil, and strewing orange-blossoms along the fleeces of the bridal-dress.

"Will my lover ever cease to love me—ever wish he had not made me his wife? Somehow, although my trust in him is absolute, to-night I have a presentiment of evil—a feeling as though my happiness was passing from me. Can you explain it?"

"You are nervous," smiled Elsinore. "Try to remember nothing but the fact that your lover is waiting for you—waiting to call you his wife! May Heaven avert all evil from your future, my dear child!"

"Ah, you are kind!" and the bride bent and kissed her. "But how pale you are! Are you ill, Miss Lane?"

"I have a sharp pain in my side. It is nothing; I have had it occasionally for years. Ah, they want you, and you are quite ready! Go to your lover—go to love and happiness."

And Beatrice went—to love and happiness, leaving the girl, scarcely older in years than herself, to struggle against the sharpness of mental and physical pain—the poor orphan of the rector, who had so loved Gerald Elden that the years had not taught her forgetful-



ness, nor his faithlessness given her pride to crush the idolatry to death.

Then she was sent for to take the children to the church; and, still white from the pain she was enduring, with a wistful protest in her soft, dark eyes, she obeyed the summons.

For a moment the faces of the guests were confused and uncertain to her, as she led her charges through them to the place assigned.

Then the ceremony commenced, and at the first pause, when a man's "I will!" rang out clearly through the silence, a low cry left her lips, and her eyes flew open, and fixed themselves upon the bridal party.

There was Beatrice, with delicate, downcast face; there the clergyman, saying the solemn words that were to bind two for a lifetime; and there, with the light glancing from the gold of his hair, and showing the calmness of lip and eye—there, linking his life to another's for all time, stood Gerald Elden.

The old love, the old memories, the vows he had spoken to her, the dream which they had dreamed, but only she remembered, crushed heavily on the heart of Elsinore; the lights about her swayed and dimmed; the haughty faces became blurred, and finally faded; she saw but one in that assemblage, and that one had said to her,—

"You will not doubt me? You will know, once my own master, I will hasten here to claim your promise?"

Ah, how keen the lance was that went through her heart! how her face whitened and her pulses numbed and slackened under the pain! A low, moaning sob burst from her, but no one paid any heed; her knotted hands flew to her bosom, and were pressed there convulsively; but no one saw. Why should eyes turn to the governess in her corner, or hearts feel for her? What was she but a hireling, allowed to witness the bridal of Beatrice Arden?

Beatrice Arden no more, but Beatrice Elden, the beautiful bride, received congratulations and good wishes from all sides.

At last, with a kindly remembrance of the governess, she crossed the vestry and paused before the slight, drooping figure in the great chair.

"Why, have you no good wish for me, Miss Lane?" she asked, cheerfully. "Everybody else has said something kind; will not you?"

But Elsinore, ever ready in the past with kindly, gentle words, neither lifted her head nor answered.

"Are you ill? Is that pain troubling you still?" asked Beatrice, softly, bending to look in the drooping face, her own pitiful.

The next moment a cry of alarm sprang from her lips, so sharp and shrill that it brought Gerald instantly to her side.

"What is it, love?" he questioned, anxiously.

She pointed a shaking finger at Elsinore.

"She has fainted, or—is dead!" she told him. "Look at her face. I am afraid, Gerald—afraid—"

But he was obeying her. He was turning the white, still face upward, and regarding its rigid young beauty with growing horror—was, perhaps, remembering the many times his lips had touched the softness of that cold cheek, the tender curves of those drawn, blue lips.

It was well that other hands put him aside, and in the excitement his emotion passed unnoticed; well for him that the girl who had given her life into his hands in that hour never dreamed that he had seen the face of the dead governess.

For she was dead—she who had said to him,—  
"Whenever you come, you will find me waiting!"

She would wait now among the angels—wait for the lover who had been untrue, who had loved her only for an hour of his youth!

Heart-disease, the men of science called it; some valve had closed; some tissue given way.

Gerald Elden did not listen. He only knew that as he breathed his vows there, the girl he had taught to love him had died. Was his bridal-hour a happy one?

## FORGET-ME-NOTS.

—o—

'Twas in an afternoon of May  
Two lovers, nursing love's young dream,  
Were wandering slowly by a stream  
That wound its solitary way  
Now through the wood, now through the glade,

Then passed again into the shade,  
And yet again sought out the day,  
To catch bright sunbeams at their play.

Within the wood, so dense and dim,  
Light seemed a stranger grown, and yet  
Forget-me-not and violet  
Bloomed there beneath its branches grim,  
And had for wooers, warm and sweet,  
The winds that fled the opening's heat,  
While from each bush and leafy limb  
The birds joined in their forest hymn.

"Here let us read," the lover said,  
"The lessons of these modest flowers—  
That love blooms not alone in bowers,  
In circles gay and fashion bred,  
But lives its gentle life the while,  
Though fortune's sun refuse to smile  
And fling about its humble head  
The golden beams on others shed."

"But I," said she, "prefer this stream  
As type of love: for see, its flow  
Amidst these shades is deep and slow,  
And grave, as may the place besem—  
But when its gloomy bounds are passed,  
Mark! how it leaps with joy at last  
To clasp the sun's enamoured beam,  
While flow'rs dare nothing more than dream!"

They turned them from the gloomy spot,  
And from the stream that wandered by,  
He with a troubled heart and eye,  
She with his flowers in a knot;  
And all that night her eyes were wet,  
Sweet, weeping orbs of violet,  
And all her prayer was this, I wot—  
"Heav'n grant he may Forget-me-not!"

W. B. D.

## A SECRET SIN.

—o—

### CHAPTER XXII.

"Don't you congratulate me on the success of my manoeuvres?" asked Captain Valentine, quite sure of his answer, as he looked down into Pera's face, and thought she was lovelier than ever.

"Yes, I do, indeed!" And then she added, with a sigh, "but I can't bear to see him standing like that against the wall, looking so miserable."

"If you hadn't that *arrière pensée* in your head you would say 'What airs the fellow gives himself!'" Is nobody good enough for him to dance with? As a matter of fact, there are plenty of girls who would only be too happy if he asked them.

"But he is so sensitive, and Miss Singleton's manner was so odious!"

"Do you think I should care for ten thousand Miss Singletons if Miss Clifford deigned to take an interest in me?"

"Yes; you wouldn't like to be cut by anybody."

"I would make the 'cutter' sorry, but wouldn't care a brass farthing myself."

"Perhaps Mr. Vyvyan would have said the same thing yesterday."

"Not he! He must know by this time that he is as thin-skinned as a woman"—he spoke with some impatience in his voice, which made Pera look up in surprise—"whilst, as for myself, I am sure you think that I have the hide of a rhinoceros."

"What do you mean?" with a little laugh—"It is all very well to stand by a friend—and I would, through thick and thin."

"I know you would," softly.

"Yes, but that's enough. I may do it, but you mayn't; do you understand?"

"Not in the least," shaking her head.

"Miss Clifford, you are strangely obtuse. Is it too cheeky to say that I want a little interest to be spared for me?" bending his head so as to look into her eyes.

A lovely pink stole over her cheeks, a sweet smile hovered about her lips, though she answered demurely,—

"Much too cheeky! Haven't I given you four dances—counting this?"

"Yes, but I've only been a peg on which to hang a conversation about Vyvyan."

"Wasn't that natural? If you were in trouble wouldn't he and I do the same about you?"

"Would you? That's the question."

"Of course I should," with decision.

"Then I don't mind being a peg," cheerfully. "Let us take a turn, and we can wind up close to our friend."

Slowly and gracefully they went round the room to the delicious strains of the German composer, and Val felt as if he were losing both heart and head as the waltz lingered on, and Pera's small feet went in perfect unison with his. She was nicer, and sweeter, and more lovable than any girl he had ever come across. And he almost thought that he would be willing to give up the freedom of bachelorhood, if he could win her for his wife.

Eva watched them, and fancied that all rivalry from Pera was over.

Vyvyan's eyes followed them wherever they went, and he had almost made up his mind that the engagement with Bernard Vansittart was a fiction: whilst Lady Hargreave looked on with a kindly smile, and a pathetic recollection of the days when she was young.

"They are all his friends," said Eva, mentally, "but I am the only one who really cares," and then she made her move towards him as if irresistibly impelled, throwing her mother's advice to the winds, and only listening to the counsels of her own reckless heart.

Just as she was very near him, with her lips already parted in a smile, her father stepped through an open window, and stopped straight in front of her. He put his eyeglass in his eye and surveyed his daughter critically.

"You are not looking well, child! I don't believe you've had anything. Come along with me," drawing her hand through his arm.

"Oh no, papa! Indeed, I have. The supper-room will soon be open."

"I only want you to have a glass of wine. It's my belief you've been bustling about the whole evening, and tasted nothing."

He was hurrying her away, in spite of protestations, when he was stopped by an old friend, and Eva made use of her opportunity. She looked over her shoulder with a long, tender glance, shot from under her dark lashes.

"Don't forget that you are to take me down to supper?"

"Only too proud!" murmured Vyvyan, as his cheek flushed hotly.

After all, there were a few people who cared for him, and the nicest girls in the room went out of the way to show him special favour. But why—why should the others have cut him? Such a thing only happened to cads or scoundrels, and the family of Vyvyan was above reproach, and its name had never been stained.

Well, he wouldn't stand there any longer, to have it said that he could not ask anyone else to dance for fear of a refusal. He would walk back to barracks without waiting for Valentine's cart. What were six miles or seven on a night in July, with no mud to make the road heavy?

His heart was hot with resentment, as he slowly unfolded his arms, and prepared to make a move; and yet it was hard to him to leave the room where he could watch the girl he loved, even if she did belong to another. It was such a delight to watch the ever-varying expression of her lovely face, the eyes so wistful now and then, as some slight trouble came across her mind, and then so

lit up with animation, and a girl's light-hearted merriment, that they seemed to twinkle like two stars; the lips so irresistible, so intensely kissable, their smile so captivating.

Even as he thought of her she was standing before him, leaning on Valentine's arm.

"What airs you do give yourself, old man?" said Val, chaffingly; "get a partner for the Lancers if there's anyone good enough for you, and look sharp, or there'll be no room."

"I've got a headache. I was just going to slope," he said, hurriedly.

"Now, Mr. Vyvyan, I don't call that polite," said Pera, with her winning smile.

"Supposing my partner has disappeared, I must lose the Lancers because you fancy you've got a headache?"

Again the colour rushed into his face.

"I thought Val was your partner?"

"For the last dance, yes;" and then she made a pretence of turning away, but he was by her side, breathless and eager, the very next moment.

"Will you really give it to me?"

She bent her head in graceful assent, and Val relinquishing her to Bertie, hurried up to the rector's daughter, Miss Webb, who was sitting next to Miss Singleton.

Miss Singleton said, eagerly,—

"How d'ye do, Captain Valentine? I don't think we've spoken to each other yet!"

"Impossible. Why the evening's half over!"

He shook hands, asked after her mother, Lady Winter, and then, to her inexpressible dismay, walked off with little Miss Webb on his arm, and without putting his name down on his card!

Sometimes Vyvyan was disposed to look upon the Lancers, as slow and wearisome compared with a waltz; but this one he enjoyed thoroughly. Val's great chum was opposite to him, and in high spirits, sending the rector's daughter into fits of laughter; whilst there was an indefinable change in Pera's manner, which sent his pulses galloping.

She soothed his wounded pride, she raised his courage, she made him forget the wounds he had received from others—forget everything, in fact, except that she was by his side, and inclined to be gracious. She had not been like this to him since that night at the Gatehouse. Was it possible that he had made a great mistake? And even as to the kiss he had seen Vansittart steal, he remembered that he was her cousin, and it was the way with some of these dangerous relations to claim privileges which ought only to belong to lovers.

He hated him for it, but, after all, if Pera didn't like it too much it did not matter; and so he gave himself up to the intoxication of the moment, and walked down the room, when the dance was over, with his head in the air, and Pera on his arm, the proudest man there.

"By-the-bye, Val," he said, as he came across him later on, on his way to the loes, "I couldn't understand Miss Singleton just now. Do you know if I've done anything to offend her, or any of the other girls?"

Val looked as innocent as possible.

"I believe she's made up her mind that Lord Winter's daughter ought to marry a duke, and you know," with a shake of his head, "you did go rather far the other day."

"I'm blowed if I did!" in utter amazement; but Val went off laughing, as if at a capital joke.

"It's not that," said a sullen voice at Bertie's elbow, and, turning quickly, he saw Le Mesurier close behind him; "the girls fight shy of you."

"What!" his face white as chalk, but his eyes blazing.

"Oh nothing—nothing," stammered the other.

"Go on. You said the girls fight shy of me," his manner quiet as the calm before a storm. "Kindly tell me the reason," and he waited with his eyes fixed on Le Mesurier's face.

Le Mesurier wished he had never begun, especially when he heard the rustle of a lady's

dress behind him, and saw Bertie raise his hand as if to improve the individual, whoever it was, not to interfere.

Pera saw by the expression of his face that the harm had already been done, and stood back in disgust and pain; but Eva, who had just come from the cloak-room, where she had been having a rent sewn up in her dress, looked from one to the other aghast; and as Le Mesurier began nervously, "You know there are ugly stories—" there was a crash of glass and a brilliant flash of flame, and the two men started apart.

A valuable lamp, standing on a marble table, had been thrown down, and a stream of lighted oil ran along the Persian rug, swift and dangerous as a poisonous adder.

The next moment Le Mesurier's face went white with horror, and Bertie, after one look over his shoulder, sprang back, and threw himself upon Eva Houghton, whose white dress was a sheet of flame.

It was Pera who tore down a curtain, and threw it over both, whilst Vyvyan beat out the flames with his hands.

Peter Le Mesurier rushed off, wildly crying "Fire! fire!" like a coward or a fool, as was said of him afterwards; and a crowd of horrified men and women came running out of the ball-room. Captain Valentine was the foremost, Lady Houghton was close upon his heels, whilst footmen came from the back regions with cans of water, which they emptied on the burning floor.

"Who is it? Who is it?" cried Lady Houghton, a sure presentiment coming over her, as she looked at the shapeless heap over which Pera was piling any coat or cloak that she could find.

"She's not hurt, indeed—indeed, she's not!" said Pera, her voice choked by a sob; then a strong arm was thrown round her, and she was lifted away out of danger; and she knew no more, except that her aunt's kind face was bending over her, with the tears running in a stream down her face, and her arms were burning like two live coals.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WITH one backward glance at the girl who had done her best so bravely to save two lives, Val hurried into the hall. The whole affair had lasted only two minutes, and he had been so quick in his movements that he was the first to pull aside the wraps from Vyvyan and Eva, whilst someone else held a can of water in case the fire should break out again.

The mother knelt close by, moaning piteously like an animal in pain; the father stood like a statue, not moving a muscle. But it was not indifference that kept him still, as slowly, very slowly, curtain and mat and shawl were withdrawn, Vyvyan helping with one arm, whilst the other was clasped round the poor girl's waist.

"There, don't take that off," he said huskily, as he took hold of a shawl, and wrapt it tenderly over the burnt and blistered arms. "Don't let her mother see—" in a whisper, "her—her—" His voice broke, he could not put the terrible truth into words, and his hand was shaking like a leaf.

A fearful silence fell on all, though every man and woman in the house was there. The housekeeper had pushed her way to the front beside her mistress, a groom was rubbing elbows with a nobleman, and all were bound together with one common bond of sympathy and fear, and all were silent.

A voice came from the background where Le Mesurier was standing with chattering teeth.

"Shall I go after a doctor, Lord Houghton?"

"Ah, you are right," rousing himself. "John can go," looking towards one of the grooms. "Take the brougham, bring back Dr. Grosvenor if you can; if not, Dr. Grimmer. And lose no time." The groom touched his forelock, and disappeared.

"Now," to Vyvyan, "can't we lift her up on to a sofa?"

Vyvyan looked at Val; he could hardly speak. He knew that this girl who was dying before his eyes had given her life to save him from pain. Cut off in the beauty of her youth, what would become of her mother, and how could he ever face her?

"What is it? What are you waiting for?" said Lord Houghton, his hand on Captain Valentine's shoulder.

Val swallowed something in his throat, as he raised his head, without lifting his eyes.

"Has anyone got sheets of cotton-wool?"

"Cotton-wool!" It was the first word that Lady Houghton had spoken, but the presence of a need roused her to mental activity. "Let me see," putting her trembling hand to her forehead. "Yes, round the pink coral in the box in my dressing-room. Can you find it?"

Mrs. Green, the housekeeper, nodded without speaking; for she also felt a burr in her throat, and went to fetch the wool. Soon it was brought back, and the guests were huddled into the drawing-room, and Lady Houghton was led away by Val into the boudoir—not without remonstrance.

There she sat down in a heap, on a chair, whilst she shook from head to foot with long, gasping, tearless sobs.

Then Lady Hargreave came away from the sofa where Pera was still lying, mercifully unconscious of the horror and the fear weighing on every heart, and kneeling down by her side, took one of her poor shaky hands in hers and tried to comfort her, or rather to soothe, with voiceless sympathy.

When only the father and the housekeeper were there with the lady's maid, the shawl was partly withdrawn, but Mrs. Green let it fall with a shudder. Bertie caught it hastily with his one free hand, and then it was seen why he could not move before.

The arm which was round his neck was so terribly burnt that if it had been moved too quickly it would have left the skin clinging to his coat.

Cotton-wool had to be inserted underneath, Bertie helping with the tenderness and dexterity of a woman, while his face was deadly white, and his lips quivered.

Eva's face was scarcely touched, and the jetty lashes and brows stood out in startling contrast to the ghastly pallor of the cheeks. Beautiful she looked, resting her small dark head on his shoulder, as it had fallen when he threw himself upon her, and she clung to him in her fright.

His heart yearned over her with great tenderness and overpowering pity, as he helped her father and the others to raise the girl's slight figure on to a mattress covered with down pillows.

Val came back as soon as he was wanted to help carry the mattress into a bedroom on the ground-floor, which had been hastily prepared for her reception.

Le Mesurier, who was nearly mad with grief, came rushing out; but Lord Houghton ordered him back with a peremptory wave of his hand. He hesitated, but met the astonished stare of Captain Valentine, who set the example of retiring as soon as his services were no longer needed.

"Oil is the best thing," he said to the housekeeper, "and I have heard of flour."

"Yes, sir! I think oil is the safest."

"Have you got enough, or can I get you any?"

"Plenty, thank you, sir. Dr. Grosvenor, I daresay, will say it's all wrong—doctors mostly do," with a sigh, as she poured some on the cotton-wool.

Val put his arm within Vyvyan's, and drew him away.

"You are very much hurt, I can see. Shall I drive you home at once, and doctor you?"

Lord Houghton was coming down the corridor with a bottle of sal volatile in his hand; he overheard Valentine's remark, and stopped.



To both young men it seemed as if he had aged by ten years since the middle of the evening as he said,—

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Vyvyan, for not thinking of you before. Of course you will not leave my house?"

"I should like to stay, if you would allow me, till I can hear what the doctor says, but after that I'll go back."

"You are to stay! don't go away; my little girl," huskily, "may want to see you. Jenkins," looking over his shoulder at his valet, who was following him "Speak to somebody to get a room ready for Mr. Vyvyan, and see that he has everything he wants; and Valentine, you will stay too?"

"I'll be over the first thing, Major Protheroe will make everything straight with the Colonel for Vyvyan. If I could do anything for you, you know I would, Lord Haughton."

"Yes, yes, you've been very good. Hark! What's that?" listening to steps coming along the now deserted hall. "Thank Heaven, it's Grosvenor!" as a small man, with his hat in his hand, came along the corridor, the light falling on his bald head, and earnest, intelligent face.

Oh! what immense power for hope or despair seemed to hang in the doctor's hands, as he hurried into the sick room, conducted by the father, and followed by the mother, looking like a ghost—a mere faded resemblance of her former self!

"Poor, poor girl!" muttered Vyvyan, under his breath.

"Ay, indeed. I'm afraid there is no hope. How did it happen? I suppose nobody knows?"

"The lamp fell. I think she overturned it to interrupt Le Mesurier," huskily. "He was telling me why—why so many girls cut me."

"Then he deserves what he's got," fiercely. "I hope he'll like the idea. He's killed the girl, and he's been head over ears in love with her for the last six months. Poor devil! I couldn't wish him a worse fate, though my fingers itch to thrash him. You are feeling bad; come along," looking down with anxiety into Bertie's face, which was contracted by a frown of pain.

"Stay a moment," with a terrible anxiety in his eyes. "Pera's not hurt?"

A change came over Val's face.

"Miss Clifford was in the boudoir with her aunt. Her arms were badly burnt, and she fainted."

"Can't I see her?"

"No, she doesn't want either of us. I dare say she has gone home by this time."

"But it's thanks to her I'm alive at this moment. She worked like a horse, and there was no one to help her. I couldn't have put out the flames if she hadn't thrown something over us."

"She had immense pluck as well as common sense," said Val quietly. "But we can't discuss it now."

"You are not deceiving me?" in a sudden agony of apprehension, staring into his friend's face, as if to read the truth there, and not in his words.

"Look here, my dear fellow, occupy yourself with one girl at once. This one demands all your thoughts and all your gratitude; the other can wait till tomorrow. Here's Jenkins!" in a tone of relief. "Is Mr. Vyvyan's room ready?"

"Yes, sir. I will show him there if he will follow me."

The two men followed down the now silent passages.

The rug, with a large hole in the centre of it, had been taken up, and the water which had been used to put out the flames lay in puddles on the marble floor.

The front door was open, and the musicians, in a disconsolate group, were standing under the portico, their instruments covered up in black cases which looked weird in the grey light of morning. They were waiting for the omnibus which was to take them back to War-

burton, as soon as anyone had time to think of it.

The guests had gone away, thinking it best to relieve Lady Haughton of their presence, although most of them would have willingly stayed to hear the doctor's verdict.

One brougham was still moving slowly about the carriage-drive, the horses drooping their heads with a melancholy air.

Vyvyan, catching sight of it, recognised it as Lady Hargreave's, and again a terrible suspicion shot through his heart. Was Pera really ill? and were they keeping it from him? Haint with pain and anxiety, he suddenly rushed against the wall.

"Hold up," said Val.

At the same moment a door was softly opened, and Pera stood on the threshold, wrapped in a long white cloak, her face as white as her wrapper. Her eager eyes looked up into Vyvyan's face, taking in at a glance the damaged state of his clothes—his shirt-front burnt brown, and dropping to pieces, his coat-sleeve showing a large vacuum here and there. But he was alive, thank Heaven! and with the use of all his limbs.

She stretched out her hands to him, the love which she had so long concealed shining out of her eyes; and he, half dazzled and bewildered, only conscious of a great joy at the sight of her, caught them in his, and kissed them passionately.

Then the corridor seemed to grow dark, the ceiling to come down to meet the floor; a sudden lassitude made his knees give way. And when he opened his eyes again he was lying on a bed, with Valentine and the valet standing beside him, with very grave faces.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

"But little hope." That was the doctor's verdict, with a few scientific phrases added to it which conveyed small information as to the amount of injury sustained.

A physician was telegraphed for from London, and came down in the afternoon. He held a long consultation with Dr. Grosvenor, approved of all he had done, made a few suggestions of not much importance, pocketed his fee, and departed.

After that a silence, as of despair, fell upon Haughton House, and the servants seemed afraid of the sound of their own footfall along the passages.

Carriage after carriage came during the day with inquiries after the invalid, but they were all sent round to the side door; a gardener being posted at the inner gate to turn them back, lest the sound of wheels should disturb Eva Haughton's fitful slumbers.

The catastrophe had been so sudden, and so dreadful, that Lady Haughton felt stunned. She insisted upon staying by her daughter's side, speaking to nobody, only watching all that was done with a sombre earnestness.

If her husband spoke to her, she would answer if possible with a bend or a shake of her head, whilst her eyes were fixed on her daughter's face—that pretty face which had been her pride and her pleasure ever since it smiled on her from its cradle.

She could not let it go into the cold and darkness of the grave; it was made for something better and brighter than that. Let the ugly, the lame, the withered, go where beauty and health are of no account, but not the young girl, in the flower of her youth, with the prospect of a long, happy life before her—not the only child—the one much-loved darling of devoted parents. Oh! Heaven could never be so cruel! That was the cry of her aching heart, as she sat by the side of her child's bed. Eva should have every wish of her heart if she would only live.

And so the days dragged on; one so much like the other that some of those in the sick-room lost all count of time, and only knew it was Sunday by the clang of the church bells across the fields.

Mr. Le Mesurier was about as miserable as

a man could be. He was facing Eva when she threw over the lamp, and therefore knew that it was no accident. She could have had but one motive, namely, to stop him from betraying the truth to Bertie Vyvyan. If she were dying now he was the indirect cause of her death, and if she died it would be for the love of the man whom he hated.

This was enough to madden him. Instead of being softened by sorrow his heart grew hard as a flint. A sullen rage possessed him; he longed to be avenged on Vyvyan, whom he chose to hold responsible for all that had happened. If he had never existed, with his "cursed good looks," Eva would now be as well and as bright as ever. Ever since she first took this fancy to Vyvyan she had turned against himself. If he could only get him out of the way—arrested for the murder of Anthony Greaves, for instance—he fancied it might make all the difference.

If there was a chance of her recovering he would try it; but to be the least successful he must get hold of Vansittart, and induce him to help. There would be no difficulty about that, for from what Miss Clifford let out that night at the Hall the evidence was strongest against her cousin, and, according to his creed, every man was willing to injure another if by so doing he could save himself.

Even to plot against Vyvyan he could not leave Warburton, whilst Eva's life hung in the balance.

Day after day he made his pilgrimage to Haughton House, where he was never let inside the doors, although Captain Valentine's mare was generally to be seen standing outside, with a groom standing at its dainty head.

Val came constantly; in fact, whenever his regimental duties left him free to go where he would.

Bertie was very bad, and unable to stir, his burns having grown worse than they would have been if he had spared himself at all at the first. His whole care had been for Eva, and he had rubbed the scorched skin ruthlessly in his efforts to help her. He had only a confused recollection of what had passed between Pera and himself, when he saw her at the door of the boudoir; but the tale which Le Mesurier had begun to tell him was like a nightmare to him.

Val was very good to him, and tried to cheer him by telling him of the many ladies who had left their cards of inquiry at the barracks for Mr. Vyvyan, notably amongst them Miss Singleton's mother, Lady Winter, who had asked for particular information about his health in the friendliest manner.

But his spirits were at the lowest ebb, and nothing seemed to brighten them. He was in a fidget to get out of the house, but the doctor would not hear of his being moved, and Lord Haughton insisted upon his staying where he was.

Eva still lingered, much to the surprise of the London doctor, who expected every time he came that it would be the last. Her wounds were slowly healing, which showed there was still some vigour left in her constitution, but she was so deplorably weak, that she could not even raise her head without assistance.

She was delirious for some time; and the mother's heart had a pang when the name of Bertie Vyvyan hung so often on her daughter's tongue; but when the brain was calmed she did not mention him, only gazed wistfully into Lady Haughton's face, as if she had a question to ask, but would not utter it.

Whilst the mother in her anguish longed to say "Only stay with me, my own darling, and you shall marry anyone you like. What was a disappointment about a son-in-law compared with her daughter's precious life?"

She said to the doctor one day, "Is't it sometimes the case that if you can grant the cherished wish of a patient it gives them new life?"

Dr. Grosvenor looked hard at Lady Haughton.



[BERTIE THREW HIMSELF UPON EVA HAUGHTON, WHOSE WHITE DRESS WAS A SHEET OF FLAME.]

ton. "If you see a patient sinking without any apparent struggle of mind or body, and you know it is because he has set his heart on something which is kept from him, then, if you can give him that something, the change is often bordering on the miraculous. I have seen a man recover when hanging on the very edge of the grave."

"Thank you, that is what I wished to know," with a bend of her head, as if to put an end to the conversation.

The doctor went away, feeling convinced that she had a plan in her head for marrying her daughter to the young officer who had done his best to save her.

It was a romantic idea, for he had heard that the young fellow had only a diminutive income besides his pay, but he was very much afraid that his patient would never live to carry it out.

Poor girl! it was a thousand pities, and poor Vyvyan! who would thus be robbed of a lovely heiress.

Lady Haughton lost no time in broaching the idea to her husband, who opened his eyes wider than usual, and told her she was dreaming. Poor Eva was not suffering from a sentimental malady—would that she were!—and love would never cure positive bodily injuries.

"But would you give your consent?"

"It is no use discussing the subject."

"But I must discuss it."

"Vyvyan, as far as I understand, is under a cloud."

"Under a cloud, when he tried to save our child's life!"

"That has nothing to do with it. There is some queer story about a money-lender. Bad sign; young men ought to have nothing to do with such sharpers."

"The story was hatched by Mr. Le Mesurier. Captain Valentine was telling me all about it yesterday. He stands by his friend through everything, and declares he is as innocent as himself."

"I am sure I should be very glad to think it," leaning back in his chair, wearily.

"May I tell Eva that it will be all right?"

"My dear, you are too precipitate. It is no use taking any steps whilst the poor child is in her present state."

"Now's the time for action. I'm convinced if we wait it will be too late," and Lady Haughton hurried from the library to her daughter's room.

She knelt down by the bed and whispered.—"Darling, is there anything on your mind?"

The sweet pale face turned towards her on the pillow.—

"Only I should like to know if Mr. Vyvyan was sorry?" in a whisper.

"He only left the house a few days ago, having been here ever since, and he comes up to inquire every day. I've spoken to your father"—her voice trembling, and a tear rolling down her cheeks—"and if you'll only get well it shall be all right, darling."

A swift, questioning glance from the dark eyes, and nothing more, except a slight shade of pink in the sunken cheeks, and the shadow of a smile round the lips. But from that day forward there was a marked improvement in the condition of the patient, and even Dr. Grosvenor admitted that there was room for a shade of hope. Lady Haughton was nearly beside herself with joy, and penned a note to Mr. Vyvyan, asking him to get a week's leave, if possible, and spend it at Haughton.

"When you come back," laughed Val, "you will be an engaged man, I bet you a fiver."

"Done! A fiver is not to be despised by any means," looking as grave as a judge.

"You'll be awfully sorry to lose it."

"Look here, Val; no chaff. I've only been waiting for this poor girl to get better. I'm going to cut it. It's not fair on the regiment to stick in it when there are all sorts of lies sown broadcast about me!" and he looked out of his window into the barrack-yard with

a sort of cut-throat expression on his saddened face.

"Hang the regiment. We mean to stand by you to a man—not counting Le Mesurier, who's a mean sneak, and will have to be kicked out. Listen to me, old man. I'm a second Solomon when preaching to others. Hook it, and they'll say you were afraid to face it out; stay, and they'll say there couldn't be anything in it. Now, Lord Haughton's carriage stops the way!" as the sound of wheels was heard below, and the dog-cart drove into the yard. "So farewell. Send me a line if anything's up."

When they had gone out Vyvyan took the reins from the groom and vouchsafed no reply to the chaff round him. Any allusion to Eva stung him with a feeling of compunction and almost remorse. He had done nothing to win the girl's love, and yet it had been given to him in all abundance. He was no oxcomb, but he had seen it shining in her eyes so plainly that he could not fail to read, and he was grateful for it from the bottom of his heart. And yet, and yet, would that it had been given to anyone else? He had not breathed a word about it to anyone, and yet Val seemed to have guessed it, and even chaffed about it now when the poor girl would probably never live to marry anybody.

The next evening a hurried scrawl reached the barracks, addressed in Vyvyan's hand to Captain Valentine:—

"Haughton House.

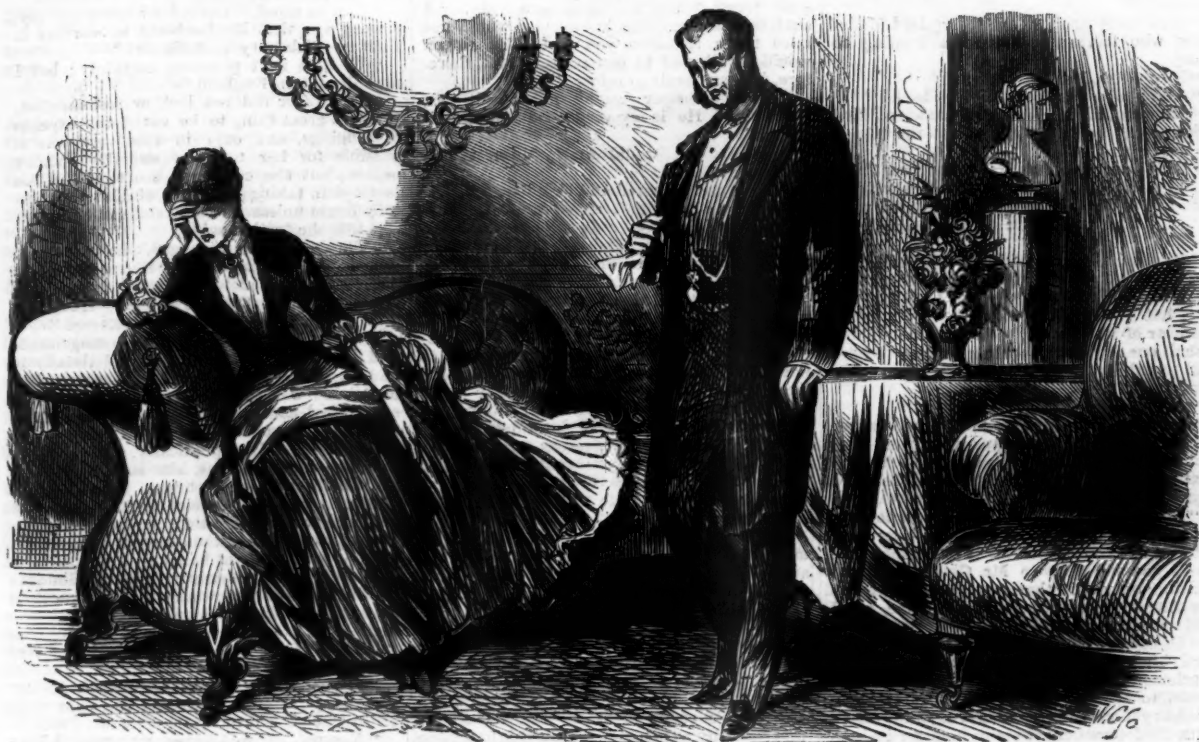
"I'm engaged to Miss Haughton. I ought to be the proudest man in England. Don't tell anybody but Lady Hargreave. I enclose the fiver.—Yours,

"B. VYVYAN."

"Pera's free! by Jove, I'll go in and win!" and Captain Valentine waved the letter above his head like a schoolboy.

(To be continued.)





[“MADELEINE HAS RUN AWAY FROM ME, THEN?” MR. CHICHESTER SAID, HOARSELY.]

NOVELETTE.]

## MADELEINE'S MARRIAGE.

—:—

### CHAPTER I.

“MAMMA, I can't—I really, really can't,” said Madeleine Frazer, with a shudder of disgust. “The more I see of him the less I like him.”

Mrs. Frazer, with difficulty, suppressed an exclamation of impatience.

“But what is the matter with Mr. Chichester, Madeleine?”

“Everything, mamma. I hate whiskers, and I don't like the cut of his clothes. He looks as if he had vegetated in the country all his life, and had never been drilled.”

“I daresay—but, *en revanche*, he has an estate worth ten thousand pounds a year, belongs to an old county family, is good, generous, and respected, and loves you devotedly.”

“But I don't want his love.”

“You would be very foolish if you threw such a chance away,” retorted Mrs. Frazer, with decision. “I wonder how many girls of eighteen who have only just left school ever get one like it?”

“Two in a thousand, perhaps,” replied Madeleine indifferently, “if they are very beautiful; and I am not beautiful at all, so that I hoped I might escape.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well! I fancied no rich person would ever want me, and so I shouldn't need to marry until I loved someone very dearly.”

“You knew, Madeleine, that you would certainly need to marry as soon and as well as possible,” replied Mrs. Frazer, severely. “I told you a year ago that I was spending capital on your education, and thereby reducing my income, which was never large, and, of course, that sort of thing can't go on long.”

“But my education is finished now, mamma!”

“And so is my ready-money!”

“But we shan't want ready-money.”

“You are as ignorant as the French Princess who, when she was told that the people wanted bread, proposed they should buy cakes. How are we to live without money, pray?”

“I only meant that people would trust you until it was convenient to pay,” answered the girl, gently.

“Yes, only that it might never be convenient, and what then?”

Madeleine hung her pretty head in a depressed sort of way.

“Why need we anticipate evils? Things generally come right; and if they shouldn't I could go out as a governess.”

“You!” and Mrs. Frazer laughed rather scornfully. “There is no girl in England less fitted for such a position.”

“Perhaps you don't know what I am fitted for,” replied Madeleine, very seriously.

“Many of us have dormant talent, and virtues which no one suspects until something happens to call them out. You fancy I am a poor butterfly of a creature, mamma, because you have only seen me idling amongst the flowers, and enjoying the sunshine; but if dark days come I know I have the strength in me to face them—and, anyhow, I would rather work for my bread than marry a man whom I did not like.”

“Simply because he does not go to a fashionable tailor for his clothes, and wears whiskers instead of a moustache, be pleased to add.”

“I don't mind adding that I am afraid I do think a good deal of looks—like most girls of eighteen,” she went on. “But as far as Mr. Chichester goes, I dislike him, principally because he wants to marry me, and hasn't the good feeling to withdraw when he sees that I don't want to marry him.”

“Unfortunately, he is very much attached to you, Madeleine.”

“That is no reason for persecuting me!”

“My dear child, don't use such strong language! How has he persecuted you?”

“I call his persistence persecution. At his age, he ought to take ‘No’ when he gets it. I daresay I am not the first girl who has refused him.”

“There, I am sure you are quite wrong. It is well known that Lord Norbery has been trying hard to catch him for one of his daughters, and you must have seen for yourself how he has been run after generally.”

“I wish Lord Norbery had caught him,” sighed Madeleine. “I would have given him up with pleasure, and it is quite time Lady Alicia was married, and Lady Florence too. I can afford to wait.”

“I don't think you can,” returned Mrs. Frazer, significantly. “Besides, you would never have such a chance again.”

“No; but perhaps I should have a worse chance that I liked better.”

Mrs. Frazer had left her strongest argument to the last—hoping she might not have to use it at all. But when she found Madeleine so determined to reject Mr. Chichester—whom she had persuaded into hoping, in spite of her refusal—she said reluctantly, with a flush on her face,—

“I am under great obligations to Mr. Chichester, Madeleine, I am sorry to say; and I have no way of repaying them except through you. You know how much he has been here ever since I settled at Lansdorf; and one evening when he called I was in great distress of mind. I had just heard of the failure of the County Bank: my dividends had only been lodged there a week before. I had rent, school-bills, and my Christmas accounts to pay, and not one farthing in the world. I believe I was crying when he came in upon me suddenly, and, with his usual kindness, he insisted upon knowing what was the matter. I hesitated for a time, but I was so utterly cast down I had need of sympathy, and presently I told him all.”

“If I have the name of a friend I must be allowed the privileges of one,” he said, and

thrust a cheque for five hundred pounds into my hand."

"How long ago is that?" inquired Madeleine, who felt as if she were turning to stone.

"Two years, last Christmas."

"And you have never paid him back?"

"How could I, Madeleine?" answered Mrs. Frazer, confusedly. "I never got the money back from the bank."

"Only you might have taken me away from school, and let the house here. I shouldn't have minded how I borrowed, or what I went without, if we could have got this debt off our mind."

"If you had gone without everything, we couldn't have paid it," she replied.

"Not all—but some, surely."

"That was what I wished, but he would not hear of it. 'Wait,' he said, 'for a while. I shall one day ask you for a good gift that will pay this poor little debt a hundred thousand times!'"

"And he meant me?"

"Yes, he meant me—although I never guessed this at the time, and wondered—and wondered what he could give him of such value that it would pay my debt a hundred thousand times!"

"It was my life! My happiness! He was to have instead of the five hundred pounds—very hard interest on the loan—as far as I am concerned. I will pay the debt to Mr. Chichester," she added, "but not in that way. I will give up my strength, my talents, and my time, but I will not give up myself!"

"Of course, what you mean is giving them the absurd, Madeleine. But likely that a chivalrous gentleman like Mr. Chichester would allow a girl to spend all her best years in mere drudgery for the sake of paying him what, with his fortune, must seem such an insignificant sum."

"A chivalrous gentleman would sooner do that than spoil the same girl's life, mamma."

"Your life would be spoilt in that case far more surely than if you married Mr. Chichester, whom, in a very short time, you would learn to love. I am far from believing all one reads in sensation stories about governesses' trials, and the ill-treatment they receive at the hands of jealous wives or sisters; but that they are wretchedly paid, and little considered by the majority of their employers, and hold an anomalous position in the household, which is most painful to their pride, I do believe, because I have noticed it all my life. The servants resent serving them, because they have the vulgar idea that they are only superior servants themselves, as they take 'wages,' and the ladies of the family look upon them as an interruption—even when they are not jealous of them, so that, altogether, they are very liable to be left out in the cold. And how would you like such a lonely life as that?"

"I shouldn't like it, of course, but I could bear it since others do. And then I should have the feeling that all this was helping to an end."

"Helping to make you old and ugly, I suppose you mean, before your time, and ruining all your prospects in life. Governesses don't marry, as a rule; they are left too much in the background, and are you prepared to give up all your future? Besides, let us look at the matter in a practical way. You are well-educated and accomplished, but you have only just left school, and therefore could not command a high salary. From thirty to sixty pounds a year would be the utmost you could make, and if you gave up every farthing of this, it would take you twelve years to pay Mr. Chichester's debt."

"But if I were away, and no expense to you, mamma, I thought you would be able to help."

"Mr. Chichester would not take it from either of us; he has said so twenty times at least. All he will take is yourself and if you won't give him yourself, you must remain in his debt as long as you live—that is all."

"But he has no right to lend money on such terms," she answered haughtily. "I shall tell him so. He knows you would not have taken it unless you had believed you would be allowed to pay it back, and, therefore, it is an insult to refuse."

"Mr. Chichester would not insult me, Madeleine. He is my very good and sincere friend."

"I wish you would marry him, then," pouted Madeleine.

Mrs. Frazer coloured and looked annoyed. "You see he hasn't asked me," she answered with dignity. "Besides, if I didn't come to take another husband when I was a young widow, I shouldn't be likely to wed one now that I am middle-aged."

"I beg your pardon, mamma," Madeleine said, feeling that her petulant speech had been a great impertinence, and muted the displeasure it had provoked. "I ought not to have said that, and certainly I should not have liked Mr. Chichester for a stepfather much better than I should have liked him for a husband. But (meaningly) don't let us have him for anything at all; let us pay him instead. I think if you would rather not—"

"No, no!" said Mrs. Frazer, quickly. "I will speak to him. He will bear it better than we."

"Just as you like; only please make him understand that my decision is irrevocable, and it is none of our business to refer to the question again."

#### CHAPTER II.

ASTONISHED who had heard the above conversation between Mrs. Frazer and her daughter would have been surprised a week later when Madeleine's engagement to Mr. Chichester was formally announced. How this had come about she hardly knew herself. When her second refusal was given him by Mrs. Frazer he asked for an interview with Madeleine, and something he said touched the girl, probably, or she found he was so much in earnest she could not bear to hurt his feelings.

However this may be, she said yes, meaning no all the while; and having said yes, was persuaded by Mrs. Frazer that she must abide by it.

She felt like some wild creature caught in the snare's net when she realised all she had brought on herself by her rash monosyllable. But Mr. Chichester was so kind, and tender, and diffident, she could not pick a quarrel with him, and as he was quite aware that she did not love him, yet he had no reason to find fault with her coldness, much as it grieved him.

There was only one thing that comforted Madeleine, and that was the possibility that something might happen in the future to release her from her bondage. An engagement in our country is not a solemn ceremony, as it is in Germany, and could be broken off at any moment.

So far, there had been nothing said about marriage; and she meant to postpone the evil day, if she could not put it off altogether. But Fate was against her, and thwarted her at every turn.

Suddenly Mrs. Frazer fell ill, and the doctor discovered that her lungs were very weak, and she must get away from Lansdorf as soon as the autumn fog began.

"If she spent one winter in the south of France she might come back cured," he said. "But to remain at Lansdorf to increase the evil and render it irremediable, perhaps."

Directly Mr. Chichester heard this he placed his villa at Cannes at her disposal without a moment's hesitation.

"But what would you do?" she asked, "as you always go there in the late winter and spring?"

"Stay away," he replied, "unless I go to an hotel!"

"That I could not possibly allow," Mrs. Frazer said. "Fancy turning you out of your own house!"

"But if I don't mind?"

"You do mind, I know, for I heard you say, a week ago, that England was unbearable in January, February, and March!"

"Well, it isn't pleasant, certainly; but I needn't stay in England."

Mrs. Frazer did not look or feel satisfied. It was a great thing to be saved the expense of lodgings, and only in this way was it possible for her to carry out the doctor's orders; but she could not see that she was justified in taking possession of Alan Chichester's house unless he could share it with her; and this she further said:

"That might be managed," he answered, with suppressed eagerness, "in one way—and one only. If Madeleine would marry me in the beginning of October we could travel for a time, and join you at Cannes later on."

This would be a delightful arrangement, and dispose of all difficulties; and already it had suggested itself to Mrs. Frazer. But Madeleine was the chief person to be consulted, and her mother had a strong conviction that she would say no.

And so she did, emphatically, at first. They could go into lodgings, she said, and leave Mr. Chichester his own house.

But, on making inquiries, no lodgings could be found at all within their means; and Mrs. Frazer declared that the question was settled, and she would stay at home.

Madeleine did not contradict her. She just stole away to her own room, and kneeling down beside the little white bed where she had dreamt, so many pleasant dreams, she wrestled wildly with herself, and wept like one who has no hope.

But an hour later she went back to her mother quite calm, although her eyes were still red, and said quietly,—

"You will go to Cannes, mamma. I have decided to marry Mr. Chichester in October!"

Mrs. Frazer would have embraced her then, but the girl put her gently away.

"Don't, please," she said, in a constrained voice. "I have a bad headache, and am going to lie down."

Mrs. Frazer sent a messenger to Broadacres at once with the glad news, and did not trouble herself very much about poor Madeleine.

To do her justice, she knew that Mr. Chichester was a good man, with whom her child would be safe, and she believed that Madeleine must love him when she understood him better.

That he was not the kind of man to take a young girl's fancy she was ready to admit; but he was quite capable of winning her heart. And the match had so many solid advantages she was glad to secure it on any terms.

Mr. Chichester rode over at once, and was so happy and excited he looked quite handsome.

Mrs. Frazer wished Madeleine could have seen him; but Madeleine had undressed and gone to bed, and begged not to be disturbed.

The next morning he came early, with a lovely bouquet of hothouse flowers in his hand, and Madeleine was forced to see him.

"I can never thank you enough," he said, as he raised her trembling hand to his eager lips; "and it is much the best arrangement, as we can watch over your mother's health together, and bring her home cured, I hope."

"I hope so," replied Madeleine, coldly; "it would be very hard if not."

"It is always hard to see those we love suffer, Madeleine."

"Yes, of course; but I didn't mean that!"

"Then what did you mean?" he asked, looking at her keenly.

"That it wouldn't have been worth while to marry so soon."

Certainly Mr. Chichester had never taken the tone with himself that Madeleine was marrying him for love; but he would have liked her to take this tone. It pained and humiliated him both that she should seem to put it so entirely out of the question.



"It is not worth while in any case," he said, gravely, "unless you wish it."

"It was all settled last night," she answered, "and we need not talk of it any more."

And she hid her face in the flowers.

Mr. Chichester was desperately in love, and Madeleine was fair to look upon. Not beautiful, as she had herself said, but unusually pretty. Her eyelashes and her dimples were things to dream of, and her red mouth had a very sweet expression, whilst her bronze hair had so many lights and shades, her cheeks such a soft, wild-rose bloom. She passed for something better than a beauty with the men—although her own sex found fault with every feature in her face.

Ever since she first came to Lansdorf Mr. Chichester had loved her, although she was but a "lassie" then, and the years as they passed strengthened this feeling, until it became an overwhelming passion.

Now, just as hope was leaving him, the happiness he had longed for had come within his reach, and how could he bear to thrust it from him?

Besides, he believed that any woman was to be won if you loved her enough to be very patient and tender. And Madeleine was so young and innocent, her heart must needs be a blank page on which he could trace any lines he liked.

Unfortunately for himself, he underrated the strength of her character, and thought her a weak child who might be easily governed and led, whereas she had more determination than most men, and was capable of carrying out her purposes with energy and promptitude.

"But, Madeleine, we must talk of it," he said; "there is a great deal to arrange!"

"Can't you settle everything with mamma?"

"I could, but it would not be so satisfactory as settling everything with you, Madeleine!"

Madeleine had risen as if to indicate that their interview was at an end; but she sat down again now, with the air of a martyr, and thrust her hands into the pockets of her apron to keep them out of her way.

"First of all," he said, "I must know what day it is to be—mustn't I?" and he bent forward persuasively.

"The first of October," she answered quickly, with averted eyes.

"Look at me, Madeleine," he said; "I want to see if you mean that!"

If she had obeyed he would have seen more than he cared to see, but she did not obey.

"If I may it, of course I mean it!"

A little piece of blue-veined wrist was peeping out of her pocket, and on this Mr. Chichester's lips fastened hungrily.

"My darling!" he murmured, "you shall never regret the promise you have made me—that I swear!"

Madeleine had been crimson before, now she became deathly pale, and a sudden giddiness made her sway forward on to Mr. Chichester's breast. In a minute his arms were about her, and he was covering her lips and cheeks with eager kisses.

"How dare you—?" she began, and then stopped herself, remembering that she had given him the right.

A sense of humiliation indescribable, of utter loathing and repugnance, overcame Madeleine then, and, wrenching herself free, she darted from the room, to fling herself on the floor of her own little chamber, and indulge in a wild passion of tears.

Meanwhile Mr. Chichester was pondering rather gloomily over Madeleine's extraordinary conduct. Mrs. Frazer had warned him that she was nervous and excitable, thinking it necessary, perhaps, to prepare him for a few scenes like the one that had just passed. But even with this hint Mr. Chichester could not unravel the mystery, for, of course, Mrs. Frazer had not carried her revelations any farther, and he was far too chivalrous to suspect Madeleine of marrying him for his position and wealth.

He was so absorbed in his thoughts he did

not hear Mrs. Frazer enter, and was not conscious of her presence until she tapped his shoulder with her fan, and said, playfully,—

"A penny for your thoughts? You look as if you were solving some knotty problem."

"Or, rather, trying," he said. "I don't understand, Madeleine, Mrs. Frazer."

"In what way?"

"Her manner is so peculiar."

"Yes, isn't it? I always tell her so," answered Mrs. Frazer, with great apparent candour. "The fact is, she is very shy; but that will wear off after she is married, and has seen more of the world. I suffered from the same complaint when I was her age, and so I know all about it."

"But you were not shy with Captain Frazer, I presume?"

"Indeed I was—shier with him than with anyone else."

"Perhaps you didn't love him?" said Mr. Chichester, anxiously.

"I assure you I did—with all my heart!"

"I think he must have doubted this sometimes, if you kept him at arm's length, as Madeleine keeps me."

"I don't know. He used to say afterwards that he liked me the better for it, and quote those lines about the fruit that falls without shaking being a little too ripe for him; and we were very happy together in our married life."

Mr. Chichester walked twice the length of the room, moodily, and then he stopped in front of Mrs. Frazer, and said, with great earnestness,—

"I love Madeleine more than life, Mrs. Frazer, and only after Heaven; but I would rather give her up this very moment than do her the great injustice of marrying her if I could not make her happy. Therefore, if you have any reason to suppose that she dislikes me, I beseech you to tell me so at once, ere it is too late."

"Dislikes you!" repeated Mrs. Frazer, in a tone of deep surprise, which, if not real, was very fine acting; "does a girl ever accept a man whom she dislikes?"

"Not unless she has very powerful reasons for so doing."

"Which Madeleine has not, for let me assure you that your wealth counts for nothing as an inducement."

"That I honestly believe," he said. "But as she is not marrying me for love, why is she marrying me?"

"Because she likes and respects you, and believes you will make her happy."

"I should be satisfied if I felt sure of that. If I have her liking now I may gain her love later, and I will make her happy, Mrs. Frazer!"

"I know you will," she answered, and this time she was perfectly sincere. "I have never had a moment's doubt on that subject."

"Thank you," he said earnestly. "Couldn't you impress Madeleine with your faith?"

"I am not sure that she needs impressing. The child is shy and strange, and requires indulgence. Let her alone, Mr. Chichester, and she will grow accustomed to you in your new character, by degrees, and treat you with more familiarity and confidence."

"There is room for improvement," he said, rather drily. "At present she takes the tone that I am a roaring lion going about seeking whom I may devour, and flees at my approach."

"That will pass off. You mustn't be impatient."

"If I thought it would pass off I could be ever so patient," answered Mrs. Chichester. "But Madeleine is so different to most girls."

"Would you have loved her if she had been just like all the rest?"

"No; assuredly."

"Then don't find fault with your blessings," she retorted, playfully. "I don't consider you much to be pitied, after all."

"Pitied! rather to be envied above all

others. Only you see 'Man never is, but always to be blessed.' Having so much I want more; then think of how perfect my happiness might be if only Madeleine loved me!"

"I don't know about that—it is good to have something left to hope for. The happiness that is too perfect is apt to fall."

"I have never had any experience of such happiness as that, but I think it must be difficult to love too much of such a good thing."

"I hope you will always think so," she said, and began to breathe freer.

That first terrible question had quickened all her pulses uncomfortably. "If you have any reason to suppose that she dislikes me I beseech you to tell me at once ere it is too late!" And Mrs. Frazer knew that Madeleine disliked Mr. Chichester, and was simply marrying him because in no other way could she pay the debt she owed him.

But if Mr. Chichester had so much as suspected this she would never have accepted the sacrifice; and to prevent him suspecting this until he was married, at any rate, was Mrs. Frazer's one care and thought. After that nothing mattered, she thought, for Madeleine would reconcile herself to the inevitable, and learn to love her husband, as a good wife should.

This was how she argued, with feminine Jesuitry; and though this peril passed, Mrs. Frazer suffered a good deal during the next few weeks, living in fear lest Mr. Chichester should take Madeleine to task for her coldness, and she should tell him the whole truth.

But he had promised her to be patient, and though his heart failed him sometimes, and he longed to seize her in his arms and squeeze the truth out of her, he was afraid he should scare her out of the small gleams of favour she sometimes accorded, and as half a loaf was better than no bread he held his peace.

And as the wedding-day drew near Madeleine certainly became much more gentle to him, if still cold; and sometimes he caught an expression in her eye that puzzled him—it was so like remorse. He loaded her with gifts, and she took them all—smiled, and thanked him, and put them away.

"Why don't you ever wear anything I give you?" he asked one day, and Madeleine flushed to the colour of the red roses in her bosom, and murmured something about their being too good.

"Nothing is too good for you, Madeleine," he answered, softly; "and though flowers suit your youth and freshness, jewels would become you, too, passing well, and I have a fancy to see the effect of those turquoises if you would do me the favour of wearing them to-night."

"Why to-night?" she asked; "we have no one coming!"

"I know, but I thought you dressed for me, not for outsiders, and I should like to have you all to myself when you looked nice."

He smiled at her, but he could not coax a smile from her in return.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Chichester, I would so much rather not wear those turquoises," she said, at last, hesitatingly.

"But why?"

"They are packed up—"

"Already?" he observed, in a tone of surprise.

"It does not do to leave anything to the

to last."

"But are they so securely packed they cannot be got at, Madeleine? I only gave them you this morning."

"No, and I could get at them, of course, but it would be a good deal of trouble, and I hope you won't mind if I refuse."

He was silent a minute, and then he said, "You cannot wonder that it hurts me to see all my presents scorned, Madeleine, for it is such a pleasure to me always to choose what I think you will like."

"You are very kind," she murmured, "but you know quite well that I do not value a thing for what it cost, and am more pleased

with a bouquet of flowers than I am with diamonds."

"But flowers fade so quickly."  
"That does not matter surely, if they are sweet whilst they last."

If one had loved him she would have liked best something she could keep always in memory of the time which should be the happiest of her life.

But because she did not love him, she required no souvenir, and the consciousness of this hurt Mr. Chichester so much, he had to turn away to hide his emotion.

Still, when the evening came he hoped she would make a gracious little concession, and wear the turquoises—and he glanced quickly at her as he entered the drawing-room.

She was sitting by the open window, in her favourite chair, with a large red fan in her hand, which she waved idly to and fro, and, as usual, she had a bunch of roses at her bosom, and not a single jewel save a silver butterfly which had been Mr. Fryer's present to her on her eighteenth birthday.

Mr. Chichester sighed, but he uttered no reproach.

After all, there are some things that even a husband cannot demand—and he was only her betrothed.

### CHAPTER III.

MADEIRA had insisted that the wedding should be a very quiet one, pleading the state of her mother's health as a reason, and Mr. Chichester gladly consented, having all a man's horror of fuss and ceremony on such a solemn occasion.

Mrs. Frazer would have liked to show off, but was overruled by Madeleine, who claimed as a right the management of her own marriage. Madeleine had one bridesmaid only, a school friend of her own age, to whom she was greatly attached.

Mary Somers arrived three days beforehand, and made a very favourable impression on Mr. Chichester, who cordially expressed the hope that her friendship with Madeleine would continue and they should see a good deal of her on their return to Lansdorf.

To his surprise Madeleine did not echo his wish, but turned her head away, and looked out of the window.

But they probably understood each other, he thought, and Madeleine had forestalled him privately, although it would have been prettier to repeat the invitation at his prompting. Mary did not look hurt, anyhow, and accepted gaily.

"We shall be at home in May," he went on, "unless Madeleine objects."

And he glanced at her again.

"I don't expect I shall have a voice in the matter," she said then.

"I fancy you will have a voice in every matter that concerns me," was his reply.

"I should take good care I did," put in Mary, brightly. "When I have a husband I mean to keep him under proper control."

"Quite right, too," laughed Mr. Chichester. "You don't look, though, as if you would be a tyrant."

"That would depend upon circumstances," she retorted, nodding her dark head sagaciously; "wouldn't it, Madeleine?"

Madeleine shrugged her shoulders, and did not appear to be interested in the discussion, as she waved the big red fan Mr. Chichester was beginning to dislike to and fro in her languid hand.

His first act of authority after their marriage, he decided, should be to suppress that same fan, which not only cooled the air, but sometimes chilled him to the very heart. Over and over again it had waved him away, and come between his lips and her cheek, until he began to look upon it now as an instrument of torture, and ardently desire its destruction.

When he was gone, half-an-hour later, Mary Somers turned on her friend, rather sharply,—

"I can't think how you can be so cold and ungracious, Madeleine," she said. "You are always hurting Mr. Chichester's feelings, and he is so devoted to you! Most girls would give the whole world to have the love of such a good man."

"I don't deny his goodness, Mary."

"Then why aren't you nicer to him?"

"Goodness isn't everything."

"It is almost everything in a husband."

But, candidly, dear, what fault have you to find with Mr. Chichester?"

"None whatever. It is simply a case of—"

'I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell.'"

"Oh! Madeleine!" exclaimed Mary, in horror. "And you are going to marry him in three days!"

"Don't remind me of my misfortunes!" said Madeleine, passionately. "I try to forget them when I can!"

"But why do you marry him, if you don't like him?—and why don't you like him?" questioned Mary.

"I must marry him, and, as I told you just now, I don't know why I dislike him. There are people in this world who are antipathetic to us, although we are willing to admit that they have good qualities. Everyone says Mr. Chichester is good, so I am sure he is; but he doesn't please me, for several reasons, and so there is an end of the matter."

"But that ought not to be the end of the matter," returned Mary, with decision. "I shall speak to Mrs. Frazer—I!"

Madeleine smiled disdainfully.

"I have already spoken to her."

"And Mr. Chichester—I!"

"Can see for himself, I presume, how much I love him."

"Oh! but this is terrible!" exclaimed Mary, who was honestly and happily in love with a poor curate, and meant to wait for him ten years, if necessary; "the marriage must be broken off. You know you couldn't promise to 'love, honour, and obey,' Mr. Chichester."

"I shall have to perjure myself, as many have done before—that is all."

"Don't, Madeleine," said her friend, persuasively, "it would be such a great sin. Let me speak to Mr. Chichester, if you haven't the courage."

"I have the courage, it isn't that," returned Madeleine; "but there are reasons I cannot explain why I must marry Mr. Chichester, and so, please, don't let us talk about it any more. I oughtn't to have told you anything, but I have always been in the habit of confiding in you, and I couldn't help myself, and I know you will keep my secret."

"On the contrary, Madeleine—you must let me save you."

"You couldn't, and wouldn't, for I intend to marry Mr. Chichester, whatever happens!" she answered, with great decision. "If you were to betray me you would do great harm—and, indeed, you could not in honour. Leave me to my fate, and everything will come right in the end, no doubt. Anyhow, you could only make things worse by interfering!"

After this Mary's tongue was tied, but she felt very sorrowful, and looked so too, for Mr. Chichester noticed the change, and asked what was the matter.

"I—I don't know," answered Mary, and burst into tears.

Mr. Chichester began to think that the climate of Lansdorf was very lowering, and produced hysteria. Mary Somers had looked so bright and happy when she came, and in two days she had lost her spirits and her bloom, and couldn't even bear to be questioned. If this were the fact, it accounted for Madeleine's languor and depression, and he need not trouble about it so much. He made this suggestion to Mrs. Frazer, and she at once adopted it.

"Of course," she said, "we ought to have thought of that before. If the climate here

doesn't suit me, why should it suit Madeleine? She will be quite different when you get her on the other side of the Channel."

So that Mary's changed looks, instead of serving as a warning, were actually a comfort to Mr. Chichester, and he hurried on to his fate.

All weddings are very much alike, and there is very little to describe.

Madeleine looked very pale under her bridal veil, but she bore herself finely, and no one could say that she flinched, even when Mr. Chichester placed the sign of her bondage on her finger, and she felt him thrill with passionate delight at the thought that she was his own—his very own—until death should them part. Then a faint flush stole into her face, and Mary saw her lips quiver a little, but save and excepting this she gave no sign.

Presently she took his arm, and walked composedly into the vestry, where she signed her maiden name for the last time, in a firm hand, and then the Rector congratulated her warmly, and Mr. Chichester took her away.

The bells rang, of course, and the villagers were all eager for a peep at the bride, but Madeleine sat back in a corner of the carriage with her veil about her face, and so cold did she look, and statuesque, that Mr. Chichester dared not lift it to kiss her, although he had just gained the right.

When they reached the house she lingered in the hall talking to her old nurse until Mrs. Frazer and Mary Somers appeared with the Rector, and an old friend who had given the bride away, and Alan was deprived of the precious five minutes with her alone he had been counting on, to his mortification and disgust.

A grand wedding breakfast after such an unpretending wedding would have been absurd, but Mrs. Frazer had ordered a substantial meal, and Mr. Chichester had sent some of his best champagne, so that the few present were well regaled.

Madeleine ate the wing of a partridge, and drank some wine, and then she said she felt faint; and her mother, who had been watching her anxiously all the morning, and was frightened by her white, stony face, proposed that she should go and lie down for a little while.

Madeleine eagerly welcomed this proposition. "That would do me good, I am sure," she answered promptly. "I am only tired."

She rose promptly, and so did Mr. Chichester, bending down to speak a few tender words to her as he opened the door. Perhaps, something in his manner or expression touched her, for to his surprise and delight she held out her hand,—

"Good-bye—forgive me," she whispered, and then she was gone.

Mary Somers followed her upstairs to help her off with her white dress, and then Madeleine put on her dressing-gown and lay down on the bed.

"Leave me perfectly quiet until the last moment," she said, "and I shall, perhaps, get to sleep."

"How long shall you take to dress?" Mary asked.

"Allow me half-an-hour, to make quite sure; and Mary—wistfully."

"Well, dear."

"Give me a big very kiss, and don't judge me harshly."

"Why should I judge you harshly?" inquired Mary, as she embraced her affectionately. "You have behaved very well."

"So far."

"And, of course, you will continue to behave well. Having married Mr. Chichester you are bound to do your duty by him."

"What a good world this would be if every one did his or her duty," remarked Madeleine, with a half sneer. "Some of us are very willing, but the flesh is weak."

"We all have that little disadvantage to contend with," answered Mary, smiling, "but you were always rather determined, Madeleine, and so whatever you want to do you will do."



"Whatever I want to do I shall do," answered Madeleine. "You are quite right."

And she closed her eyes as if to show that she wished to be alone. Mary Somers went out then, closing the door softly after her, and returned to the dining-room. Mr. Chichester assailed her with anxious questions the moment she reappeared.

"Has the faintness quite gone off? Is she really better? Will she sleep, do you think?"

"She seems inclined to sleep," Mary replied, "and the faintness has quite gone. I am to leave her quiet till the last moment."

Mr. Chichester glanced at the clock.

"The train leaves at three. You need not disturb her for an hour and a quarter. Poor child! I hope she may sleep."

Exactly to the moment Mary Somers rose, but Mr. Chichester, out of his tender consideration, pleaded for ten minutes' grace.

"Madeleine is never long dressing," he said, "and we can drive a little faster to make up for lost time."

So Mary waited ten minutes more, and then she went upstairs, and knocked at Madeleine's door. There was no answer, and thinking she was asleep, at last she opened it, and went in. To her surprise and dismay no one was there, but glancing round the room she caught sight of a letter conspicuously placed on the toilette-table, and seizing hold of it, found that it was addressed to Mrs. Frazer.

Mary took in the whole situation at once. Madeleine had flown. She stood quite still for about five minutes quieting herself, and then she shut the door carefully behind her, and went to find Mrs. Frazer.

Mrs. Frazer was lying on the couch in the drawing-room, resting after her unusual fatigue, and Mary prepared her for what the letter might contain before she opened it by saying,—

"Madeleine is not in her room, but I found this. I am afraid there is something wrong."

"What should be wrong now?" inquired Mrs. Frazer, who had fancied that the moment Madeleine was married there was nothing more to fear, and it was evident that no suspicion of the truth crossed her mind as she opened her letter. But as she read, anger succeeded to incredulity, and terror to anger.

"She is gone!" she gasped. "Mary—she is gone. Who will tell Mr. Chichester? You see I am not fit."

Nor was she, certainly, for she trembled like an aspen-leaf, and her lips were as white as snow.

"I will, to spare you, Mrs. Frazer," replied Mary, who was always ready to help others; "only what am I to tell him?"

"Read!" said Mrs. Frazer, agitatedly.

And she handed her the letter.

"My dear mother," Madeleine began, "I am afraid you will be very angry with me, but, indeed, I have struggled hard, and I find I have not the courage to live with Mr. Chichester. I know he is good—and I am wrong and wicked, but we cannot govern our feelings, and as I should only make him miserable if I were with him it is surely better we should remain apart. I have taken nothing with me that came from him, and I shall never ask anything of him but his forgiveness. If I have spoilt his life he has spoilt mine, remind him, so that we are almost quits. And now, good-bye, mother. I shall, perhaps, hear of you sometimes, and you must have learnt to do without me in any case. Tell Mr. Chichester that I am going to work for my living and that though I shall not bear his name I shall never forget that I am his wife."

This epistle sounded heartless to Mary, as she read it aloud, but it was a difficult one to write, she knew; and who could doubt that the girl had suffered terribly before she had decided to take a step that must cut her off from her people, and launch her all unguarded on a cold world, which has no pity for the helpless, and considers the weak fair game.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"WELL!" said Mrs. Frazer, helplessly, when Mary had finished reading, "what is to be done now?"

"The first thing to be thought of," answered Mary, "is how to prevent a scandal, and save Mr. Chichester's feelings. What is more, we must make it possible for Madeleine to come back some day when she is wiser, and realises the wrong she has done. For she forgot, did she not, that he has a wife and no wife, and she should have gone away last night, and not to-day?"

Mrs. Frazer knew why she had chosen differently, but she did not care to say. Madeleine had paid her debt—after a fashion—but had evaded the consequences; which was, of course, cowardly and mean.

She hung her head, and cried weakly, knowing that this evil had been wrought by her really, and that poor Madeleine had been persuaded, into this miserable pretence of marriage.

"How are we to save Mr. Chichester's feelings?" she said. "He must know the whole truth."

"Yes, but no one else need. Let Mr. and Mrs. Babington think that Madeleine is still indisposed, and not able to leave until later in the day. We cannot take Anna into our confidence, of course (Anna was Madeleine's old nurse), and she will take care that the cook does not guess the true state of the case. This evening, after dark, Mr. Chichester will go away, and who is to know that Madeleine is not with him?"

"They will see she isn't at the station!"

"Yes; only he mustn't go to a station where he is known."

"And how about the coachman?"

"He must be sent back to the Hall, and a cab ordered from Marston."

"Still I don't see—" Mrs. Frazer began.

"I shall go away with Mr. Chichester, Mrs. Frazer, and—he will take me to town. Who will know that I am not his bride, or indeed, that there is a bride to be looked for where he is not personally known?"

"And you will do this, Mary?"

"Certainly I will, for Mr. Chichester's sake. I was to have left this afternoon, and I can telegraph to my father that I have been detained. It is all very simple, only for the pain we must needs give one who is so good and true, and who deserves better of fate—and Madeleine."

Mrs. Frazer was crying now, but she stretched out her hand to Mary very gratefully.

"How sensible you are!" she said; "you think of everything as far as the present is concerned; but what about the future?"

"That concerns Mr. Chichester, and Mr. Chichester only, Mrs. Frazer. I cannot dictate to him. If I were he I should let the Hall, and remain abroad; but he may prefer to return!"

At this moment he was heard calling up the stairs, in a cheerful voice,—

"Are you ready, Madeleine? We shall miss our train!"

And Mrs. Frazer gripped Mary's hand, and said excitedly,—

"Let me get away, and then bring him in here. Only be quiet, or someone will guess!"

As Mrs. Frazer disappeared through one door Mary opened the other, and called out faintly, "Mr. Chichester, will you come here?"

He heard her, and crossed the hall in two strides.

"Is Madeleine here, then?" he asked, cheerfully.

"No," she said; "please shut the door—and—"

But her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, and not another word could she speak, whilst Mr. Chichester watched her, wondering. At last she held out Madeleine's letter in sheer desperation, and hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears.

Mr. Chichester did not understand it at first

evidently, for he read it twice through before he seemed to realise anything of its meaning. And then he had to question Mary to make sure.

"Madeleine has run away from me, then?" he said, hoarsely.

She bowed her head. She could not have spoken just then to save her life.

"She says she has not the courage to live with me," he went on, reading from the letter in his hand, "and that as she would only have made me miserable if she had been with me, it was better we should remain apart. If all this is true, why did she marry me? She knew it yesterday, and the day before yesterday, and the day before that—and need not have waited until she was my wife to publish this discovery. Now she is bound to me, and I am bound to her—and yet she has no husband, and I have no wife—and what worse misfortune could happen to us both?"

"That is true," answered Mary, compassionately; "but she acted on impulse, Mr. Chichester, and did not realize all this. But because I know Madeleine to be good at the core, I believe she will come back to you some day, and humbly ask your forgiveness. She will not find liberty so sweet as she thinks, and when she has time to reflect she will see what a sin she has committed, and be anxious to atone. Just now there seems no light through the darkness, I am afraid," she continued, gently; "but every cloud has a silver lining, and if one day she should make up to you for all you have suffered, your gain then will be greater than your present loss."

"I see what you mean," he answered, painfully. "I have not lost her love—I have only lost her; but then I hoped to gain her love."

"You are more likely to gain it now," replied Mary.

He shook his head mournfully.

"You forget, Miss Somers, that 'They never pardon who commit the wrong!'"

"Unless they are of a peculiarly generous nature, and Madeleine is that. She may do wrong from impulse, but her heart and her conscience are both true, and, therefore, she will soon be sorry for what she has done, and long to retrieve her error. And then," added Mary, with emotion, "you will remember that she was very young, Mr. Chichester, and take her back!"

"We shall see when that time comes," he said. "At present there does not seem much to look forward to, I must say."

"Except the silver lining," she reminded him.

"And that, not having your faith, Miss Somers, I fail to see. But now let us talk business, if you please. What is to be done to hide our misfortune. Neither Mrs. Frazer nor myself would care to be the talk of the neighbourhood!"

Mary told him then what she proposed, and he fully concurred, and suggested that Anna should be sent for at once and told the truth.

Whilst Mary went to fetch her he dismissed his coachman, explaining that Mrs. Chichester was not able to go then, and he was to go home and enjoy himself, as he should not have the horses out again, but take a fly later in the day.

"Just like the master," Benson told his fellow-servants. "He alway thinks of our pleasure!"

And as he was accustomed to consideration as well as to proper discipline, he never guessed there was any particular motive for this concession.

Anna was quite overcome when she heard what had happened, and kept exclaiming,—

"I never should have believed this of Miss Madeleine, she was always such a sweet young lady. But she won't stop away long, sir, I am right sure of that. She was never one to persevere in what was wrong!"

"There! what did I tell you?" said Mary Somers, nodding her head sagaciously towards Mr. Chichester. "Anna knows her even better than I do, and she says that too!"

"We shall see," he gravely repeated. "The question is, now, how to keep cook from gossiping?"

"I will send her out, sir, shall I? She will be very glad to have an afternoon with her sweetheart. And when she comes back, at nine o'clock, I shall just say you are gone, and there will be an end of the matter."

"Give her this sovereign from me to buy herself a wedding gift," Mr. Chichester said, taking one out of his purse. "As to you, Anna, we will have our reckoning later."

"I am very glad to do what I can, sir, without any reckonings," she said. "I love Miss Madeleine as if she were my own child; and it grieves me she should behave so ill. I fancy she is crying now for very shame, as she used to do when she was a child, after I had been obliged to scold her. But she has done a thing that is difficult to undo, don't you see, sir? And then, how is she to know it could be undone?"

They all seemed to make excuses for her. Mr. Chichester thought; and though he could hardly have borne to hear her blamed, he could not help thinking she had more sympathy than she deserved.

After all, why had she married him if it was impossible to do her duty?

Did they consider that his life was spoilt through no fault of his own, whereas if she had sorrows she had brought them on herself?

It was natural that he should argue thus in the first excitement of his intolerable anguish, for though he tried hard to hide his feelings, and somewhat deceived Mary, he was suffering a perfect martyrdom.

"And some of us would cry for sorrow if we could," answered Mr. Chichester, grimly. "But it is no use grieving over spilt milk! Where is Mrs. Fraser, Miss Somers; do you know?"

"She has gone to her room. She is so much overcome I am afraid she could not see you," continued Mary, who knew that Mrs. Fraser would die rather than meet Mr. Chichester just then. "Can I take any message for you?"

"No, except this, that I hope she will go to Cannes, as we had planned. She will find everything ready for her if she will just write a line to the housekeeper from Paris to tell her when she may be expected. Her health is the chief consideration; and there is nothing to be gained by her remaining here, as it is pretty certain Madeleine will not return to Lansdorf."

"It is quite certain," returned Mary, with decision, "the only house in this neighbourhood she could go to would be yours."

"And that is the last house she would care to visit!"

"Now. But who can tell what the future will bring forth?" said Mary, with an air of cheerful prophecy that was put on for the occasion. "And, after all, I would rather be you than Madeleine, Mr. Chichester, for you have a clear conscience and she has not!"

None of the little party at the Lodge remembered very well afterwards how that miserable afternoon was passed.

Mrs. Fraser kept to her room for fear of being assailed with questions she could not answer without condemning herself.

Mary packed her trunk, and went backwards and forwards to the dining-room, where Mr. Chichester sat gloomily smoking, and wondering, perhaps, what harm he had ever done that he should be so severely punished!

"But be the day ever so long, at last it rings to evensong," and at eight o'clock the fly drove up to the door, and Mary descended, closely veiled, and was handed in by Mr. Chichester, who took his seat beside her, and they drove away into the darkness, silently, side by side.

## CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Norton's drawing-room was the picture of elegance and comfort combined, and

Mrs. Norton herself was quite in harmony with her surroundings, as she sat by the fire, with her pretty little feet on the fender-stool, and looked reflectively into the coals.

She had a plump figure and a trim waist, soft brown eyes, and red lips, and there was something so kind, so soft, and motherly about her, you knew there must be a nurseryful of happy little ones upstairs somewhere, and a contented husband in the city working for them all, and looking forward to the hour when he should return to his well-ordered home, and charming little wife.

Mrs. Norton had six children, and as the two eldest were aged respectively nine and ten, she had decided to have a governess in the house rather than a morning teacher, in order that they might have more attention, and leave the nursery, for which they were getting a little too old.

She had advertised in the *Times*, and had had so many answers, she was embarrassed to choose, and was just deciding to put the four most eligible into a china bowl on the table, shake them well up, and then fix on the writer of the uppermost letter, when James, the footman, opened the door, and said, respectfully,—

"There's a young lady wishes to see you, ma'am, if you please."

"What is her name?"

"She said Oswald, ma'am, I think."

"Oswald—Oswald," repeated Mrs. Norton, thoughtfully. "I don't think I know anyone of that name. Did she tell you her business, James?"

"No, ma'am; shall I ask her?"

"Please—or, stop!—she may as well come in, perhaps. What is she like?"

"Quite the lady, ma'am," answered James, withunction; "and dressed in black."

"Dressed in black!" That decided the question. It was not in Mrs. Norton to repulse anyone who was in trouble.

"Let her come in," she said—this time with decision—and James vanished, to reappear presently, followed by a slight, elegant-looking girl, whose pale face and large, wistful eyes made a strong impression at once on Mrs. Norton's tender heart.

"Pray sit down," she said, gently. "You look tired, and presently, when you are a little rested, you shall tell me what you want."

The girl sank into the nearest chair wearily, and explained that she had come a long way, on foot; but she had seen Mrs. Norton's advertisement—

Mrs. Norton interrupted here,—

"I said 'apply by letter, in first instance.' I have a great objection to a personal interview."

"I was afraid I might be intruding, and yet I have answered so many letters, uselessly," was the reply, and the refined voice, with that ring of hopelessness through it, made Mrs. Norton feel worse than ever. "It seems so very difficult to get employment."

"I am afraid it is, judging from the immense number of letters I have had. But have you ever been in a situation before, Miss Oswald?"

"No; I have only just left school. But I have studied with a view to this possibility, and am a good linguist and musician."

"You have references, I suppose?" said Mrs. Norton, inquiringly.

"No, unfortunately."

"Then the question is settled, I am sorry to say. I could not take a person into my house, and trust her with my young children, unless I knew something about her."

The girl rose slowly, with such a look of despair on her face, poor Mrs. Norton felt like a monster, and said, with quick compunction,—

"No, don't hurry—I am going to get you a glass of wine—and you see I am right, do you not?"

"Yes, you are right; and yet—"

And then she slipped off the chair, and fainted dead away. Mrs. Norton untied her bonnet-strings, loosened her jacket, and,

placing a cushion under her head, rang for James to bring her some brandy and eau-de-cologne, and a carafe of water.

When these orders had been obeyed, she further commanded him to open one of the windows, and then go away.

Mrs. Norton was alone now with Miss Oswald, and tended her so well, she presently opened her eyes, and looked about her in a confused sort of way.

Realising the situation presently she began to apologise, very earnestly and humbly, and try to rise, but this Mrs. Norton would not allow.

"You are to lie quite still, and drink what I give you," she said, holding some brandy and water to her lips, "and presently, when you are a little better, I shall give you some soup."

At this the girl's face brightened perceptibly, and Mrs. Norton thought, with a sort of horror,—

"She is hungry, poor creature! Heaven forgive me that I never guessed!"

She had no doubt of this when she saw how eagerly she drank the soup, and ate the bread that came up a few minutes later.

"I am quite ashamed," she murmured, apologetically, "but I have been walking a good deal, and I had no dinner. I think I was exhausted, and the heat of the room, and the disappointment combined, made me feel ill. But I shall be all right in a minute or two, and then I won't trouble you any more."

"You are not troubling me now," answered Mrs. Norton, gently. "You ought not to take such liberties with yourself, my dear; you don't seem strong."

"Indeed, I never had a day's real illness in my life, only I have been a good deal worried lately. I thought it would be easy to find employment."

"Without references?"

"I thought that would make a difference in the salary, but then I didn't mind how little I had; what I wanted was a home."

"You must be very ignorant of the world if you supposed people would take you in without knowing something about you," said Mrs. Norton, compassionately.

"I fancied they would see I was respectable, and I should have done my best to please them."

"I am sure of that; but, you see, no one likes to take the responsibility of introducing a perfect stranger into her home. You mustn't feel hurt, Miss Oswald, at what I am going to say, but the world is so full of deceivers, one is obliged to hedge oneself round with precautions. My instinct bids me trust you, but how do I know that I can trust my instinct?"

"You don't know, of course," answered Madeleine, humbly. "I see I have been very foolish," and her hands dropped to her side in unutterable hopelessness and depression.

"Can't you get anyone to speak for you?" suggested Mrs. Norton. "You must have friends?"

"Yes, I have friends, or rather I had friends, but they do not approve of the step I am taking, and would not help me, I know."

"They want' you back I suppose?"

"Yes, and I could only go back on impossible conditions."

"You have not run away from your mother Miss Oswald?" said Mrs. Norton, with a tinge of severity in her tone, for she was a mother herself, and she knew what suffering the girl must have caused.

"No; but please don't question me. I could not stay with people I hated under the conditions exacted, and keep my own respect. I had to come away, or I should have died of sorrow and shame."

She spoke with intense, tragic earnestness; and Mrs. Norton, who was a penetrating little person, for all her soft-heartedness, would soon have thought of doubting her as she would have thought of doubting one of her own girls.

"If it was impossible for you to stay,



couldn't you have told your people so, and left openly?"

"No; the only way I could have left was the way I did leave, unfortunately; and even if I have to starve as the consequence, I shall never regret the step I took. Far better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith," she concluded passionately.

Here Mrs. Norton perfectly sympathised. Her own life was full of love, and she could imagine no happiness without it.

"It is impossible to judge for others," she said, "and yet I think a young woman should bear a good deal before she takes such a step as you have taken, Miss Oswald."

"I weighed everything in the balance, and I found I should lose more by staying than by going—in one sense, at any rate. Of course, I have forfeited position and all that, but then I am free, thank Heaven."

"Is freedom always safe?" Mrs. Norton said.

"It is safe for me. I shall make no bad use of it. Besides," smiling, "I shall not be in anyone's way long."

"But you are not going to allow yourself to starve rather than apply to those at home?"

"I should starve twenty times over rather than accept one farthing from those who ought to keep me," she exclaimed, with great decision. "But I am taking up your time. Thank you so very much for all your goodness," and she held out her hand timidly, lifting her pathetic young face so that Mrs. Norton could look full into the clear, honest eyes. What she saw there made her say,—

"I shan't let you go yet. You must rest for a while. You are not fit to be in the streets until you are steadier on your legs."

The girl knew this quite well, and was trembling as she thought of the noisy streets. The cabs and omnibuses and awaying crowd confused her at the best of times, being accustomed to the country; but to-day, that she felt giddy and weak, the dangers seemed to be magnified. And then she was glad to postpone the going home as long as possible, for her money was almost gone, and her landlady was beginning to suspect this fact evidently from the scarcity of her meals, and looked anything but amiable.

So that this pleasant drawing-room seemed like paradise to poor Madeleine—for she it was—and she thankfully accepted Mrs. Norton's offer. She was tucked up in a big shawl on the softest couch, and then her hostess told her to go to sleep directly, and retired to the other end of the room.

The idea of going to sleep in broad daylight when it was such a difficult task even at night rather amused Madeleine, but, perhaps, it was the effect of the stimulant, for presently she began to feel drowsy, and whilst watching Mrs. Norton's plump jewelled hands at their work, she suddenly fell into a deep, dreamless slumber.

Mrs. Norton put down her sewing then, and was contemplating her with great interest, when she heard the sound of Mr. Norton's latch-key, and stole softly out to meet him in the hall.

"Oh, James!" she said, after she had given the usual kiss of welcome, "I think I have found a governess, but she has no references. She confesses she has run away from home, and she won't tell me who she is, but I am going to engage her all the same."

"Nonsense, my love," said sensible James; "she is probably an impostor."

"Come and look at her," replied Mrs. Norton, feeling that she had no argument that could equal Madeleine's face, and she led him softly up to the couch where the girl lay asleep. Her hair was slightly disarranged, her face flushed, and she looked very young, almost childlike, and as innocent as his own little girls upstairs.

"And now you have seen her, what do you say?" whispered Mrs. Norton eagerly, as soon as they were outside the door.

"I say, ask her to dinner," grunted James, and with this he disappeared into his smoking-room.

#### CHAPTER VI.

So Madeleine was asked to dinner, and whilst apparently intent on his duties as host Mr. Norton was watching her keenly, and weighing her every word. After dinner the children came down to dessert, and with a word and a smile Madeleine won all their hearts.

When they went back to the drawing-room she played and also sang to them sweet old ballads and cheery Scotch songs, and Mr. Norton said to his wife at last, with an unusual moisture on his eyelids,—

"You'll never get those children to bed, my dear, as long as Miss Oswald sings; nor me either, for the matter of that."

"Do you want to go to bed, then?"

"No; I am going to take Miss Oswald home."

"Oh, James!" she said, reproachfully.

"You foolish creature! I mean to bring her back again; but she must have her clothes, mustn't she? and how would her landlady, know it was all right unless she went with me?"

Mrs. Norton jumped up and kissed him effusively, then she dismissed the children.

"There, be off with you all," she said, brightly; "Miss Oswald will, I am sure, sing to you to-morrow, if you are good!"

Madeleine glanced at her inquiringly, and murmured,—

"Am I to stay, then?"

"So the master says," replied Mrs. Norton, nodding her pretty head, and laughing gaily. "I am only a nonentity in this house, Miss Oswald, as you will soon find."

Mr. Norton laughed too, as well he might, and suggested they should order a cab and start. The landlady changed her tone when she found Madeleine had a protector, and said she was very sorry to part with her. But Madeleine made no pretence of being otherwise than unfeignedly joyful when she drove away from her door, and was inclined to hug the pillow that supported her tired but happy head that night. She was so thankful to have found a home again after the painful experiences of the last few weeks.

Madeleine was new to her work, as we know; but she was energetic and capable, and it was wonderful to Mrs. Norton how soon she had the children under good control, ruling by love rather than by fear, and using all her charm of manner to sweeten their study, and enhance their pleasures. They almost worshipped her, and yet they would not have disobeyed her for the world; and every night Mrs. Norton said cheerfully to her husband, in the privacy of their apartment, that he was the most wonderful physiognomist she had ever known, quite forgetting that she had been the one to discover Madeleine's merits, and suggest her engagement. The girl would have been happy now, only for the secret remorse she could not stifle. She had spoiled Mr. Chichester's life, and deserted her mother; and though she sometimes tried to persuade herself she was justified in the step she had taken, she knew better in her heart.

She was treated entirely as one of the family, and one day Mrs. Norton came into the schoolroom to say to her,—

"Make yourself beautiful to-night, Miss Oswald, as the French say; we are expecting a gentleman to dinner, and he is a very good match."

Madeleine blushed painfully.

"You know I never mean to marry, Mrs. Norton."

"I know you say so, my dear, and all the better for me if you keep to your resolution; but, anyhow, I am bound to give you the chance, and so, please, put on your pretty white dress to-night, just to oblige me!"

"I would do anything to oblige you, Mrs. Norton," Madeleine replied; "but who is it that is coming, then?"

"A Captain Strong whom my husband was introduced to the other day for the first time, and took a fancy to on the spot. He is a man of good birth and considerable fortune, but has never cared to marry because he says that girls are so frivolous. I want him to see that some of them are not, and should glory in his falling in love with you just to punish him."

Madeleine shook her head sadly and said,—

"I do not care to play with edged tools, Mrs. Norton, and I should deem it a great misfortune if Captain Strong did fall in love with me. But I am not so vain as to consider this at all probable, and shall be civil to him, of course, because he is your guest."

"Thank you!" Mrs. Norton said, and nodded her head, in her bright birdy way, and disappeared.

Madeleine did not look much at Captain Strong that night, but she had the impression of a tall, fashionable-looking man, in well-cut clothes, with a sweeping black moustache, and a quiet, grave manner, who talked well if little, and who seemed far more interested in Mrs. Norton than in her.

This was as it should be, of course, but she couldn't help feeling a little piqued, nevertheless. On this account she exerted herself to be agreeable, although she was not conscious of her motive, and once or twice Captain Strong looked up with interest and attention.

After dinner he only came into the drawing-room for a short time, and seemed hardly to listen when Madeleine sang; leaving rather abruptly as she finished her second song.

"Captain Strong doesn't seem very cheerful to-night," observed Mr. Norton, when his guest was out of the house. "I am afraid you sat upon him, Miss Oswald."

"On the contrary, he sat upon me. I felt so frivolous."

"I am sure he didn't think so."

"I don't suppose he thought about it at all," answered Madeleine, carelessly. And then they talked of other things.

Captain Strong came often to Chester square after that, and once or twice they met him in Kensington Gardens, and he walked by Madeleine, and talked so delightfully that she was quite sorry when it was time to go in. He was so nice, she began to think him almost handsome.

And then he was always so well dressed, and had such a distinguished air!

What was more, there was something very flattering to a girl of her age to feel that she could interest a misogynist like Captain Strong, and she was led on imperceptibly into feeling an interest in him in consequence.

The children were devoted to him and occasionally placed Madeleine awkwardly by such innocent speeches, as,—

"Miss Oswald, you must love Captain Strong, because you said the other day you loved everything we did."

"We were talking of flowers then," replied Madeleine, blushing furiously.

"Ah! but we meant people too. People are nicer than flowers, aren't they, Captain Strong?"

"That depends," returned Captain Strong, laughing, and keeping his eyes fixed on Madeleine's face in a way that embarrassed her cruelly.

"Depends upon what?" questioned Florence, who liked everything explained.

"Oh, the people, of course."

"Oh!" said Florence, and dropped behind to reflect.

She came to the front again presently, with a new question, that was almost as embarrassing as her former one.

"Captain Strong, is Miss Oswald nicer than a flower? Mamma says she looks like a rose in her pink dress."

"Florence!" said Madeleine, severely, "you are a perfect note of interrogation. I have often told you not to ask questions—"

"Or I shall have stories told me, I suppose?"

"No; because it is rude."

"But Captain Strong doesn't mind, Miss Oswald," persisted the child.

"How do you know he doesn't mind?"

"Because I asked him a lot the other day about you, and he answered them all!"

This silenced Madeleine, who walked on quickly, with burning cheeks and quivering lips.

She would have given a good deal to know what those questions were, but she felt it would be undignified to ask; and then Florence was so outspoken she would have told Captain Strong for a certainty the next time they met, and covered her with confusion.

They did not see Captain Strong for three days after this, and then one morning he drove up to the door in a well-appointed waggonette, drawn by two beautiful dappled-grey horses; and Florence, who was standing at the school-room window, called Madeleine to see.

"Wouldn't you like to be rich, and have a carriage like that?" she said. "I should."

Madeleine smiled sadly.

"Riches don't make happiness, Florence. I shouldn't care about the carriage and horses unless I could have other things of more value at the same time."

"A good husband?" suggested Florence.

"Why not a good father?" said Madeleine, smiling a little, in spite of herself, but colouring too.

"Because a father isn't for good, you see, and a husband is."

Before Madeleine could answer the door opened, and Mrs. Norton appeared, looking pleasantly excited.

"Captain Strong is going to take us into the country," she said, gaily, "so get dressed as quickly as you can, not to keep the horses waiting. We will take the three eldest children, Miss Oswald, if you will give them a holiday!"

"Certainly," Madeleine said, and helped them to get ready, thinking rather regretfully of the delightful drive they would have through the green lanes, and wishing she had been asked too.

"There! be very good," she said, as she kissed them; "and Jack," to the youngest of the three, "as you are not to shout out suddenly, as you do sometimes, or you will frighten the horses."

"I promise," answered Jack, who couldn't quite speak plain yet; and off they went, dancing and laughing. Whilst listening to the sound of their gay young voices Madeleine felt almost sad.

But she had not much time for reflection. Florence was scarcely down before she was up again.

"Oh! Miss Oswald, Captain Strong won't go without you. I am so glad!"

"But I am not ready, Florence."

"He says he'll wait an hour rather than not have you!"

At this Madeleine made no further demur, but hurried on her things, and in seven minutes exactly was in the hall.

"I shall never allow anyone to say in my presence that ladies are a long time dressing," observed Captain Strong, approvingly, as he handed her to her place, and sat down beside her.

In half-an-hour's time they had left London, its smoke, and its din, behind them, and were in the real country, as little Jack said, gleefully. Five more miles of driving, and they came to a lovely village, and here Captain Strong had the horses put up and the children played under the trees, whilst their elders sat on a bench, and watched them, and talked until dinner was ready, at one o'clock.

Mrs. Norton expressed her surprise when she saw the substantial and elegant repast prepared for them that they had not had to wait much longer, but Captain Strong explained that he had telegraphed to them early that morning, feeling sure that Mrs. Norton would allow the children to go, as the day was so fine.

Dinner done ample justice to by all, a stroll in the woods was proposed; and once or twice, by accident, of course, Madeleine was alone with Captain Strong, and the charm of his conversation made one hour seem like a few minutes.

He told her of his travels in many lands until Madeleine laughingly declared that she wanted to start at once on a tour round the world.

"And why not?" Captain Strong said.

"There are so many reasons why not I cannot enumerate them all," she replied.

"Tell me one," he said softly.

"In the first place, I am not rich enough to travel. Don't you see that I am obliged to earn my own living?"

"I see that you are earning it. I did not know you were obliged!"

"Do people generally go into the world from choice, Captain Strong?"

"Not as a rule; but occasionally they take the fancy to be independent."

"I never had any fancy of that sort. Mrs. Norton is so good to me I cannot help being happy with her, and I love the children. But this is not the life I should have chosen!"

"No? What then?" he asked eagerly.

"I should like to see something of the world, and have leisure for cultivation; and I am afraid I should enjoy having plenty of money, if it weren't spoilt by distasteful conditions. So, you see, I am not choosing my own lot in life, Captain Strong."

"I don't know about that!" he answered, significantly. "You might marry if you would!"

"I marry!" she exclaimed, with a sort of horror. "That would be quite—quite impossible!"

And when he pressed her for a reason, she made her escape as quickly as she could, and joined the children.

After tea, which was brought to them under the trees, to the children's intense delight, they drove quietly home, reaching Chester-square in the gloaming.

Little Jack was fast asleep in Madeleine's arms by this time, and Captain Strong's eyes often wandered to the sweet face bending above his curly head. And as he looked he sighed.

## CHAPTER VII., AND LAST.

MADELINE was not vain, but as time went on she could not fail to see that Captain Strong came to Chester-square for her, and her only; and that he would certainly ask her to marry him if he got the chance. And to prevent this was her constant aim, since she must needs refuse him.

She loved him with all her heart, and suffered so cruelly no one could fail to notice the change in her, and Mrs. Norton would often say,—

"I shall be glad when James can take us all to the sea-side, Miss Oswald, for your sake as well as the children's. You look as if you wanted brisking up."

Madeleine would colour painfully, as she always did, at any reference to her loss of appetite and bloom, and murmured something about not being accustomed to London, without at all deceiving Mrs. Norton, who was a shrewd little body, and drew her own conclusions from the facts that had come under her observation.

One night, at dinner, Mr. Norton announced cheerfully that he should be ready to take them to Folkestone in four days, and they might begin to pack up their traps.

"And, oh! by-the-bye," he added, carelessly, "I asked Strong to come in a little while this evening, quite forgetting my engagement to Mr. Lawrence; so I shall have to explain, and then leave him to you ladies!"

"Oh! but, James, you can't!" exclaimed his wife. "You will offend him for life!"

"Nothing of the sort, my dear; he is far too sensible. Besides, he'll remember all about it, for he was present when Mr. Lawrence

asked me, and knows the poor fellow is sick, and mustn't be disappointed of his rubber."

"Oh! well, if he won't mind, I shan't," Mrs. Norton said. "He is very easy to amuse."

Evidently Captain Strong did not mind. He arrived just as the children came down, and met them in the hall; so that they appeared together, he having as many little hands as he could hold.

Papa was a very popular person, but his departure was borne with philosophy this evening, as Captain Strong was making a pig out of orange-peel, and they were all absorbed in his occupation.

All the while the children remained in the room they monopolised Captain Strong entirely, and after that Madeleine sang him all his favourite songs, and he seemed very well amused.

She had been singing "Love Not" at his special request, and then, secretly overcome, she jumped up from the piano, and was going to make some remark to Mrs. Norton to hide her emotion when she found that Mrs. Norton was gone, and Captain Strong was looking at her with eyes of such passionate meaning she knew her hour had come, and shrank back with a sort of terror.

He took her hand, and raised it to his lips. "My darling," he whispered, "you know what I want to say."

"Yes," she answered, with bitter shame; "but you must not say it, Captain Strong. I am married."

She did not dare look at him as she made this startling announcement; and he did not intend she should evidently, for he walked away to the window, and did not come back for full five minutes. Then he stopped in front of her, and said gravely,—

"Was this fair?"

"No," she answered unhesitatingly. "I was always going away, but what could I do? I had nowhere to go."

"Why did you leave your husband?" he asked.

"I did not love him."

"But you knew that when you married him, I presume?"

"Yes," she answered, speaking with great difficulty, "but I could not help myself. My mother owed him a large sum for us, and could not pay it."

"And you thought to pay the debt by just taking his name for a few hours, and then casting it from you as heartlessly as if were a worn-out garment?"

"Don't be hard upon me," she interrupted, the tears streaming down her white cheeks, his eyes lifted appealingly to his. "I did not understand, and it seemed so impossible to stay."

"Was he a monster, then?"

"No. I believe he was good and kind, but what did that matter if I could not like him?"

"Tell me why you couldn't?" he said more gently; "there was some reason, I suppose?"

Madeleine was ashamed to confess that she had allowed herself to be influenced by outward appearances, and had, in consequence, never given herself a chance of discovering if he had mental advantages that overbalanced these social defects.

But he pressed her so hard she had, at last, to tell him the truth, and, to her surprise, he was not as shocked as she had expected.

"You should have told him all this," he said, "and he would have tried to please you."

"He couldn't have pleased me if he had tried," she responded, with decision.

Captain Strong smiled a little, in spite of himself.

"I see; you were determined not to like him."

"I am afraid I was."

"Will you answer me one question?" he whispered eagerly. "Would you have married me, if you could?"

Madeleine hesitated for about two seconds, and then she answered gravely,—



"Yes, I should."

"Bless you for that," he said, seizing her hand and raising it to his lips. "Since you love me everything is easy to bear; but oh! it is hard to think how happy we might have been!"

He dropped her hand, and moved away as if he could not trust himself, and poor Madeleine sobbed unrestrainedly. It was hard that she should be ending her life just when most girls were beginning theirs, and having obtained one glimpse of paradise should be turned inexorably from the door.

Captain Strong came back to her for the second time, and looked earnestly into her face.

"My darling!" he said, "there is only one thing that can comfort and help us now, both of us, and that is a rigid adherence to duty. I shall go abroad. You must return to your husband."

"Oh, no, no!" she cried; "it is less possible than ever now."

"Nevertheless, it must be done," he answered, authoritatively. "You are wronging him, and others. You are taking a place in the world you have no right to, and creating painful complications. You have tried to deceive me, and may deceive many more, and because I love you, dear, and have your peace and honour at heart, I bid you do your duty."

"But I shall hate him more than ever," she sobbed out.

"No, you won't, dear, believe me. He is a good man, and will be patient with you, and you owe him some compensation for all he suffered through you. Besides, doesn't your pride tell you that having taken a certain debt on yourself you are bound to discharge it in full?"

"You do not love me," she said, "or you would not counsel this!"

"I love you so much that I shall never have any other wife," he replied; "but I want to respect as well as love you, my dear, and that would not be possible unless you returned to Mr. Chichester!"

"Then I will go," she said, with the air of a martyr; "if you tell me to do this it must be right. And, after all, Heaven is more merciful than man, and he will not let my penance last too long. Good-bye, Captain Strong, forget me as soon as you can, and pray for me whenever you pray, for I shall need all the help I can get!"

She held out her hand, but he drew her to his heart, in spite of her resistance, and his kisses fell on her face like rain.

"Good-bye, my sweetest and dearest," he murmured, "and may we soon meet again."

That very night Madeleine wrote to Mr. Chichester, telling him that she had been wrong, and offering to return to him if he wished. She could only pray that he would not accept her offer, but this hope was dispelled that evening by a telegram from Lansdorf, telling her to expect him the next morning. Madeleine never closed her eyes all that night, but she managed to look very pretty all the same in her white morning dress, as she went down, trembling, to meet her lord and master, when the summons came.

A mist swam before her eyes, her legs shook under her, as she entered the room, but the next moment she uttered a cry of joy, and sprang into her husband's outstretched arms.

"Can you forgive me?" he said, as he kissed her again and again. "It was the only way in which you would have allowed me to win you!"

"Forgive you!" she repeated. "Oh, Alan! I am just crying for thankfulness. I thought I was the most miserable creature under the sun, and instead of that I am the very happiest. But how was it I did not find you out?"

"Oh! I was horribly afraid at first, I must own. But a moustache, and an eyeglass, and a black wig, and a suit of clothes from Poole, seemed to metamorphose me completely, the fact being, Madeleine, that in your supreme indifference to me generally, you never took

the trouble to ascertain what I really was like—isn't that true?"

"I think it was," she admitted; "and yet, occasionally, you reminded me of someone I knew—and I told Mrs. Norton so."

"Yes, I know."

"Then she was in your confidence, Alan?"

"Entirely. When I traced you, which I did almost directly, through one of the porters at Paddington, who happened to be a Lansdorf lad, and recognised the name on your boxes, I told her the whole truth candidly, and secured her for an ally."

"I see; there has been a regular plot against me," said Madeleine, half-laughing and half-crying, "and I never once guessed what was going on."

"If you had, you would have spoilt everything, Madeleine."

"Yes, it was best as it was," she answered; "I needed a lesson to cure me of my wilfulness and impracticability—"

"I don't say that. But you were determined to hate Alan Chichester, and you relented in favour of Captain Strong."

"Because," she said, saucily, "Captain Strong was nicer than Alan Chichester."

"On account of the moustache?"

"Well, no one wears whiskers nowadays."

"That is true; but I forgot that girls are very critical. I shall be wiser for the future. And now, my darling, how soon can you pack up? I have promised Mrs. Frazer she shall see you in a week's time, and you'll want a day or two in Paris. After we have spent a fortnight with her we will start for a tour wherever you wish; but I should like to get off by the mail to-night, if possible—we have lost so much time. And you owe me this."

"Ah! if that were all I owed you," she answered, repentantly; "but I will try to atone—"

"My dearest one! I can trust you," he murmured. "Let the dead past bury its dead, and we will call this our wedding-day. And, after all, your friend, Miss Somers's, prophecy has come true, and I have won now more than I lost then, since I have, at last, your very self!"

[THE END.]

Very few persons recognise the large possibilities of good with which conversation is freighted. It can infuse intelligence, spread knowledge, inspire new ideas, animate the drooping spirit, move the feelings, kindle the affections, stimulate the activities. These possibilities may be gradually made realities by every one who will constantly and patiently put in practice the two essential parts of good conversation—to seek for the best in others and to give the best that is in oneself. No large fund of information, no years of culture, no powers of eloquence are necessary in order to do this.

THE POWER OF EYES.—Large-eyed girls will bear watching, a victim tells us. In a public place the big-eyed girl will sparkle, but her escort won't. If there is one feeling in the world more thoroughly exasperating than another, it is that which a man experiences who is sitting beside a girl in the theatre and suddenly surprises her in the act of beaming upon another man. Big-eyed girls throw more meaning into their glances than they perhaps imagine. A great many of them do not intend to be flirtatious even in the smallest degree, but it is difficult to resist the unspoken flattery of the return glances which a pair of big, bright eyes will challenge, even when they express nothing but happiness. The girl finds the power of her eyes wonderfully increased by the lights and excitement of the theatre, and she is apt to use them with the utmost freedom, without for an instant intending to insult her escort or render him miserable. He sees it and suffers no end of chagrin and mortification, but his pride prevents him from showing it.

#### TESTING HER INNOCENCE.

A poor, pale Paris seamstress was arraigned for theft. She appeared at the bar with her baby of eleven months in her arms.

She went to get some work one day and stole three gold coins of ten francs each. The money was missed after she left her employer, and a servant was sent to claim it. The servant found her about to quit the room with the money in her hand.

She said to the servant, "I'm going to carry them back to you." Nevertheless, she was taken to the commissioner of police, and he ordered her to be sent to the police court for trial.

She was too poor to engage a lawyer, and when asked by the judge what she had to say for herself, she replied, "The day I went to my employer's I carried my child with me. I wasn't noticing it. There were several gold coins on the mantel, and unknown to me, it seized three pieces, which I did not observe until I got home. I was going back with them when I was arrested. This is the solemn truth, as I hope for Heaven's mercy."

The judge besought the mother for her own sake to retract so absurd a story, for it could have no effect but to oblige him to sentence her to a much severer punishment than he was disposed to inflict upon one so young and so poor.

But the mother was firm, and her firmness was sustained by a look of innocence which the most adroit criminal can never counterfeit. The court was at a loss to discover what decision justice demanded.

To relieve his embarrassment the judge proposed a renewal of the scene described by the mother. Three gold coins were placed on the clerk's table. The mother was requested to assume the position in which she stood at her employer's house. There was then a breathless pause. The baby soon discovered the bright coins, eyed them for a moment, smiled, and then stretched forth its tiny hand and clutched them with a miser's eagerness. The mother was at once acquitted.

THERE is no sadder sight than a family of growing boys and girls, or grown up young men and women, accepting coolly and carelessly every form of sacrifice and favour from loving, anxious parents, who are wearing out their lives in their service and reaping only ingratitude and indifference in return. Let each parent guard against such a state of things by the far more real kindness of training the children from first to last to share with them in the responsibilities, the labours, the sacrifices, the economies, as well as in the pleasures and comforts of the household. Only in this way can a family be truly united, and filial sympathy and gratitude be thoroughly developed.

MERCIFUL TO ANIMALS.—The Hindoo religion enjoins its followers to be kind and merciful to all living creatures. To put to death any creature that has life is an unpardonable sin to a Hindoo, while to protect it is one of the highest virtues. Beasts, birds, reptiles, and insects are as much the objects of the Hindoo's kindness as humankind. The Hindoos of the higher castes never take flesh. They live entirely on milk and vegetables. Hindoos of certain sects take meat, but they would not eat it unless it be of a goat sacrificed before a god or goddess. They would never think of shooting a bird or killing a beast. They look upon the European practice of shooting and hunting as barbarous. They distribute rice and corn to crows and other birds every day. India is the land of snakes, most of them being of the most venomous kind. But the Hindoos are not less warm in their kindness toward these creatures. Snakes that have taken shelter in a Hindoo's house are never killed by the inmates. They are regarded as guests, and allowed to wander in the house unmolested and untouched.

## FACETIÆ.

THE best thing yet discovered for seasickness is port.

OUR friend, Primus Tucker, has a dog that he calls "Illogical Inference," because it doesn't follow.

PEOPLE open their hearts and expand when they marry. At a wedding they should not be called the contracting parties.

"WELL, Brown, how short your coat is," said Jonas one day to his friend Brown, who wittily replied: "Yes; but it will be long enough before I get another."

"WHAT is the difference between an angry lover and a jilted maid?" "Give it up, old man!" "Why, one is a cross-beat and the other is a cut-lash."

"I UNDERSTAND you are a graduate, Miss. Did you ever study English literature to any extent?" "Oh, mercy, yes; we had Hogg for breakfast, Bacon for dinner, Lamb for tea, and Lover in the evening."

EDITOR: "Yes, your poem will have to be returned. The idea is very good, but the verses limp somewhat."—Spring Bard: "Well, I can account for that. I had a very bad attack of rheumatism when I wrote them."

PROFESSOR SNORE was decidedly an absent-minded man. He was on his way to the train, when he imagined that he had left his watch at home. In his absent-mindedness he pulled out his watch to see if he had time to go back home and get it.

MASTER: "John, how is this? This letter must have arrived a week ago, and you have only just given it to me!"—Valet: "But, sir, it only makes an appointment for to-morrow, and I did not think it necessary to hand it to you before."

A SEATSMAN, at a banquet, in proposing the health of the clergy, said that "in these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a Jeremy Taylor." He was next day reported to have said, "In these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a journeyman tailor."

"How do you like Mrs. Lilliwite?" asked Brown of Fogg, who had just waltzed with the lady. "Don't you admire her conversation?" "Yes," replied Fogg, "she talks well enough; but between you and me, brushing his whitened coat sleeve, 'she's a little floury.'"

MASHER (to theatre doorkeeper): "Ah, could you—aw—let me see—aw—Madlle. de Montfort? You know her—chawming young owa-ture, with blonde hair, don't ye know. D'vance—aw—in the ballet." Doorkeeper (gruffly): "No, you cannot see her, young feller. If you have any message, give it to me. I'm her grandson."

A TEACHER took an apple from one of his boys during school-hours. After a while, the teacher ate the apple while the pupils were busy with their sums. The lad, noticing this, began to cough. "What is the matter with you," inquired the teacher. "Oh, please, sir," answered the boy, "the apple has gone down the wrong way!"

PROUD MOTHER: "Do you know, dear, I believe our baby will be a great singer."—Tired father: "He strikes high C mighty often, if that is what you mean."—Proud mother: "Yes, the tones are so sweet and shrill. I hope he will be able to have his voice cultivated in Italy."—Tired father: "By Jove! good idea! Send him now."

It is stated that a lawyer was some time ago cross-examining a witness in a local court, when he asked: "Now, then, Patrick, listen closely to me. Did the defendant in this case strike the plaintiff with malice?" "No, sor, sure," replied Pat, gravely; "he struck him wid the poker, bedad." Again he inquired of the same witness: "Did the plaintiff stand on the defensive during the affray?" "Divil a diffusive, yer honour; he stood on the table."

A MAN recently went to the circus and wished to enter at half-price because he had but one eye.

"NONE but the brave deserve the fair," and none but the brave can live with some of them.

THE Spaniards must be a cynical people, or they'd never have such a proverb as "A woman's tears cost but little, but bring her much."

A COUNTRY dealer sent to London for a copy of a little book called "Happy Husband." The work not being procurable, the country dealer received a note stating that there were no "Happy Husbands" in London.

ISAAC'S DEFINITION OF BUSINESS.—Isaac, instructing his son: "Ven you sell a coat to a man vot wants a coat, dot's nodding; but, ven you sell a coat to a man vot don't want a coat, dot's peeniss, my boy—dot's peeniss!"

"How do you like Thompson's Seasons?" asked Ethalinda de Wiggs during an afternoon call on Mrs. Snaggs. "Indeed, dear, I never tried them," was the reply; "I always use the best English mustard, and grind my own pepper right from the seed."

A NURSIE youngster, being asked out to tea with a friend, was admonished to praise the estates. Presently the butter was passed to him, when he remarked, "Very nice butter—what there is of it," and, observing a smile, he added, "and plenty of it—such as it is."

SMITH: "That dog of yours keeps me awake nights, howling." JONES: "Why, I have no dog. It must be my daughter, singing." SMITH: "Is that so? Excuse me. I am sorry. I don't suppose she can be shot, eh?"

"Look here, waiter, there is a fly in this soup," said a well-dressed but disgusted-looking stranger to a waiter in a restaurant. The waiter looked at the fly critically, and finally said, "I'd give five shillings to know for certain if that fly is the one that has been nibbling at my nose all the morning."

LITTLE PAUL is having a good deal of difficulty in committing to memory the Lord's Prayer. The other night, after repeating it with the assistance of his mamma, he looked up and said:—"Mamma, won't the Lord be glad when I can say this through without a break!"

YOUNG ACTOR:—"Have you been down to see me yet lately, old boy?" FRIEND:—"No, too poor." YOUNG ACTOR:—"Nonsense! Why, you spend money enough for cigars in a week to buy a dozen tickets." FRIEND:—"Oh, I don't mean that I am too poor. You are too poor."

A TWENTY THOUSAND POUND VOICE.—"Laura: How can you ask that young Mr. Dubloon to sing? It is positive torture to listen to him. His voice is horrible."—"Ma: I want you to distinctly and permanently understand that Mr. Dubloon is worth £20,000, and any young man with £20,000 sings beautifully."

AMONG the advertisements in a German paper there lately appeared the following:—"The gentleman who found the purse with money in the Blumenstrasse is requested to forward it to the address of the loser, as he was recognised." A few days afterwards the reply was inserted:—"The recognised gentleman who picked up a purse in the Blumenstrasse requests the loser to call at his house."

HUSBAND (to his middle-aged wife, who has just come in from shopping): "The census taker was in, dear. He demanded the age of each of the family, and I was obliged to give him yours. He said it was the law." WIFE (enraged): "Law! What do I care for law? John Smith, did you tell that man my age?"—HUSBAND (hurriedly): "Yes, I told him you were twenty-three."—WIFE (mollified): "Well, I suppose the law has got to be respected."

THE man who has a volume in his voice always speaks by the book.

"MORNING paper, sir?" Old Gent, angrily:—"I have no use for a newspaper." "Have a picture book, sir?"

"I am passionately fond of paintings," a young man said, after he had kissed the roused cheek of his best girl.

SELF-APPRECIATION.—A lover sent his sweetheart his own portrait by post. To save postage, he wrote on the envelope: "Samples. No value."

"Yes, I want a man, but the work is heavy, and he must be healthy and strong. I suppose you enjoy good health, do you?"—"You bet I does, boss, when I has it!"

A SUMMERS.—Critic: "Dr. Moll seems to shun crowds nowadays."—"Poet: "Indeed! Yet I have frequently seen him at the theatre."—Critic: "Yes, but only when your plays are performed."

STUDENT: "No, a shoplifter is not one who lifts a shop, but one who lifts what is in the shop. This is an example of the beauty of the English language. You'll know more about it as you grow older."

LEW, tell me what animals you see in the house."—"A cat."—"What else?"—"Geese, chickens, horses."—"But you forgot one, which we even put up with in our rooms; it has four feet, and sometimes makes so much noise that it prevents me from sleeping."—"Yes, I know—a piano."

SAR WILLIAM (to Martha):—"But you must remember, my dear, that my taste is much better than yours." Said Martha (to William):—"Undoubtedly, when you come to remember that you married me and I married you." And William said not a word, but seemed to be thinking.

DEBUTANTE: "You young married women treat us unfairly by monopolising the attention of the gentlemen."—Young married woman, sweetly: "That difficulty is easily overcome."—Debutante: "How?"—Young married woman: "Become a young married woman yourself."

DAN, said a nouveau riche earnestly to his eldest son, "You must be more careful when you get in any more wine."—"Which wine do you mean?" inquired Dan.—"The claret. I heard one of our swell friends tell his neighbour at dessert last night that the claret was very old. Get it fresh, Dan, no matter what it costs!"

NOW, ELIZAS, dear, listen to me. When Henry comes this evening, and you pass him the pie, watch his countenance closely."—"Yes, ma."—"If he trembles with joy, ask him how he likes your cookery; but, if he shudders, just mention casually that your mother always attends to the pastry."—"Oh, ma, how kind of you."—"Don't mention it. He will hate me; but, when I live with you after marriage, all will be explained."

BATTISTA, said the mistress of a restaurant to one of the waiters, "I heard a noise have you broken another glass?" "Yes, signora, but I have been lucky this time, it was only broken in two pieces."—"And you call that lucky?" shrieked the landlady in a fury. But the waiter coolly made answer: "To be sure. It is plain you don't know what a lot of trouble it is picking up the broken bits."

"WHAT are you doing to kill time, Colonel?" said an old friend from the country, who met him in Paris.—"Well, I stroll about almost all day long, and dine here and dine there; in the evening I go to the Théâtre Française."—"What, every evening?"—"Yes."—"Well, in that case, Colonel, you ought to know the repertoire by heart."—"Repertoire!" exclaimed the Colonel, thoughtfully. "Well, I thought I knew all the pieces, but I have certainly never seen *Le Repertoire*."



## SOCIETY.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES entertained at Sandringham, for the Royal Show at Norwich, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, Princess Victoria, and a large party.

THE Royal yacht *Osbome* is under orders to embark the Prince and Princess of Wales and their daughters on the evening of the 30th inst., after their sojourn at Goodwood.

THE departure of the Duke of Connaught for India has been definitely fixed for the 2nd of September.

THE DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH has been entertaining lately, at Coburg, the Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Meiningen; and the Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia is on the eve of arrival.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHRISTIAN stayed at Oxford during commemoration from Monday till Friday, as the guests of Professor Max Müller. Their eldest son, Prince Christian Victor, who continues his studies at Magdalen College, is very popular in the cricket-field, being also an expert player.

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY has benefited considerably from his visit to Ems, where the Empress arrived a few days ago, on a visit to the Kaiser.

THE KING OF PORTUGAL, early in August, will leave for Germany, England, and Sweden on board the corvette *Alfonso de Albuquerque*, the object of his journey being to visit his sister, the Princess Antonia of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who is about to celebrate her silver wedding. The King, after being absent about six weeks, will return to Portugal on board the corvette.

THE LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND was lately entertained at dinner by the Benchers of the Honourable Society, of King's Inn. Covers were laid for two hundred guests.

LORD WILLIAM BERESFORD has lately been instrumental in saving Lady Dufferin at Simla from a terrible accident which assailed her. Her ladyship was driving on the Mall there, when her pony taking fright, bolted off at a furious pace. Attempts to stop the animal were made in vain. Lord William Beresford passing by chance dashed at the runaway, but it was some considerable time before success crowned his efforts. The hero of the Zulu war eventually succeeded in stopping the horse in its headlong career by leaping upon it from his own animal, and thus rescuing Lady Dufferin from imminent peril.

LORD BRABOURNE'S SON AND DAUGHTER won honours in the Cambridge Classical Tripos.

LIEUT. VISCOUNT DANGAN is gazetted a captain in the 3rd Battalion, the Duke of Edinburgh's Wiltshire Regiment.

Mrs. C. PRESOTT gave a charming ribbon dance recently at the Grosvenor Hall, Buckingham Palace-road. Heavy festoons of red, white, and blue ribbons hung from the ceiling, both in the ball and supper-room, and by an admirable contrivance an electric bell in the tea and refreshment-rooms announced the commencement of each dance. The ladies wore powder, with ordinary evening dress. No flowers or feathers were seen, the trimmings being exclusively composed of ribbons. There were several set dances; a ribbon Lancers, and one quadrille representing England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and in this the hostess's daughters took part.

Sir ALBERT SASSOON has given a grand ball at Kensington Gore, at which the Prince of Wales, his eldest son and daughter, and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught were present. It was a repetition of the lovely rose ball he gave five years ago, when on each occasion upwards of ten thousand roses were entwined in every conceivable corner. The handsome portrait of Her Majesty, in Windsor tapestry, was embowered with arching sprays of lovely orchids, and dotted here and there with tea-scented roses.

## STATISTICS.

DEEP BORINGS.—The deepest bore hole in the world is at Schladebach, near Kotschau Station, on the railway between Corbetta and Leipzig, and has been undertaken by the German Government in search for coal. The average length bored in twenty-four hours is from 20 to 33 feet, but under favourable circumstances as much as 180 feet has been bored in that time. Other deep holes are as follows:—Domnitz, near Wettin, 3,287 feet; Probat-Jesar, Mecklenburg, 3,957 feet; Sperenberg, near Zossen, 4,173 feet; Unseburg, near Stassfurt, 4,242 feet; Lieth-Elmhorn, Holstein, 4,890 feet; Schladebach, 4,515 feet. The dimensions of the bore hole at Schladebach are as follows:—Depth from surface.—189'6, 605'7, 661'8, 1,906'5, 2,259'8, 3,543'4, 4,069'9, 4,514'6. Each size bore, feet: 189'6, 410'1, 56'1, 1,244'7, 353'3, 1,283'6, 526'5, 444'7. Diameter, inches: 11'0, 9'0, 7'5, 4'7, 3'6, 2'8, 1'97, 1'88. The various strata passed through are as follows:—Soil and sand, about 16 feet; clay, 66 feet; sandstone (Bunter), 459 feet; anhydrite, 59 feet; brine spring, 00 feet; magnesian limestone (Zechstein), 144 feet; gypsum, 36 feet; anhydrite, 295 feet; marl-slate (Kupferscheifer), 3 feet; sandstone (Rothliegendes), 3,485 feet. The bore hole, which in January, 1855, had reached a depth of 4,560 feet, was commenced in June, 1880, but left after a year's work, recommenced at the end of 1882, and is still progressing. The cost up to January, 1885, was about £5,000.

## GEMS.

We don't know each other's burdens, the weight or the beauty of them; and we don't often know what is inside our own. We shall find out when we get to the top.

EVERY soul wants someone to come to; it is easy to pass from the experience of human sympathy to the thought of the Divine. Without it the Divine had never been revealed.

THERE is never a "Might-have-been" that touches with a sting, but reveals also to us an inner glimpse of the wide and beautiful "May be." It is all there; somebody else has it now, while we wait.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FURNITURE POLISH.—A good furniture polish is made as follows: Take half a pint of sweet oil and half a pint of vinegar, and add one pint of gum-arabic finely powdered. Put into a bottle. Before using shake the bottle well. Pour the polish on a rag and apply. No hard rubbing is necessary. If the polish be found too thick, add a little more oil and vinegar.

CARPETS.—Instead of using tea leaves when sweeping to impart a bright appearance to carpets, many persons, when convenient, strew fresh-cut grass over them, and let it remain for a few minutes before using the broom, which should be a tolerably hard one. It is said that fresh grass prevents dust from arising, and leaves no stains as tea leaves sometimes do.

RAGOUT OF COLD MUTTON.—Cut slices of meat from a leg of boiled mutton; if underdone, so much the better. Place in a kettle three slices of fat salt pork, cut in scraps, two finely-chopped onions, one teaspoon of finely-chopped carrot; when the pork begins to fry lay in the slices of mutton, fry until brown, stirring often; dredge in a little flour, and pepper well; pour in boiling water sufficient to make a good gravy when cooked. Stew slowly until cooked, keeping closely covered all the time; add a little salt if necessary. Other parts of mutton may be used for this ragout, but the meat must not be cooked too much the first time.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

It is possible for a man who hath the appearance of religion to be wicked and a hypocrite; but it is impossible for a man who openly declares against religion to give any reasonable security that he will not be false and cruel.

QUILTED PETTICOATS.—Many years ago quilted petticoats were in great demand, during the very cold weather; then they were made at home, now the manufacturers vie with each other in getting out novelties in coloured petticoats. For several seasons the Balmoral skirts were all the rage, although there were ladies who would not wear them, not because they were so warm, but because they were coloured and hence ugly in their eyes. Starched cotton petticoats in cold weather are more suggestive of poverty than bad taste, when soft wool textures made into pretty skirts can be had, or richly quilted satin and silk petticoats are sold at bargain prices, considering the fine quality of the goods and the excellent workmanship required to finish one of these very desirable garments. The quilting is beautifully done; some of the patterns show tiny diamonds, and there are shell designs effectively quilted; flowers and leaves are also well copied and often quilted in with tiny silks. For brides there are petticoats of satin in all the light shades, quilted over flannel and lined with China silk of the same shade.

A GENUINE LOVE STORY.—This story, told originally by Mr. Spurgeon, we believe, will, we are confident, strike a chord in many loving hearts:—A young clergyman and his bride were invited guests at a large party given by a wealthy parishioner. In all the freshness and elegance of her bridal wardrobe the young wife shone among the throng, distinguished by her comeliness and vivacity and rich attire; and when, during the evening, her young husband drew her aside and whispered to her that she was the most beautiful woman in all the company, and that his heart was bursting with pride and love for her, she thought herself the happiest wife in the world. Ten years later the same husband and wife were guests at the same house, where was gathered a similar gay company. The wife of ten years ago wore the same dress she had on the previous occasion; and, of course, it had been altered and remade, and was old-fashioned and almost shabby. Toil and care and motherhood and pinched circumstances had taken the roses out of her cheeks and the lithe spring out of her form. She sat apart from the crowd, careworn and preoccupied. Her small hands, roughened with coarse toil, were ungloved, for the minister's salary was painfully small. A little apart the ten-year husband stood and looked at his wife, and as he observed her faded dress and weary attitude a great sense of all her patient, loving faithfulness came over his heart. Looking up, she caught his earnest gaze, and noticed that his eyes were filled with tears. She rose and went to him, her questioning eyes mutely asking for an explanation of his emotion; and when he tenderly took her hand, and placing it on his arm, led her away from the crowd, and told her how he had been thinking of her as she looked ten years before, when she was a bride, and how much more precious she was to him now, and how much more beautiful, for all her shabby dress and roughened hands, and how he appreciated all her sacrifice and patient toil for him and their children, a great wave of happiness filled her heart, a light shone in her face that gave it more than its youthful beauty, and in all the company there was not so happy a couple as this husband and wife; their hearts and faces aglow from the flaming up of pure sentiment that transfigured and ennobled and glorified all the toils and privations they had endured.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**C. W. E.**—Your penmanship is much better than your spelling.

**W. E.**—There are numerous works on etiquette obtainable at any bookseller's shop.

**H. R.**—Insects in the ear may be destroyed by pouring a spoonful of warm olive oil, or camphorated oil, into the ear over night, keeping it there until the next morning by means of a piece of cotton wool, when it may be washed out with a little toilet soap and water.

**B. S. H.**—It is simply impossible to lay down any rules in regard to proposals of marriage. Modes are, and should be, as different as people. The best way is to apply in person to the lady, and receive the answer from her own lips. Failing in courage for that, resort can be had to a written declaration. A spoken declaration should always be bold, manly and earnest, and also plain in its meaning, so that there shall be no chance for misunderstanding.

**C. N. W.**—To bleach skeleton leaves, mix about one drachm of chloride of lime with one pint of water, adding sufficient acetic acid to liberate the chlorine. Steep the leaves in this until they are whitened (about ten minutes), taking care not to let them stay in too long, as they are apt to become brittle. Put them into clean water, and float them out on pieces of paper or cards. Lastly, remove them from the paper cards before they are quite dry, and place them in a book or botanical press. They are thought to look best when mounted on black velvet or paper.

**F. W. H.**—The word *lough* in Ireland, like that of *loch* in Scotland, is applied equally to salt-water inlets or to inland lakes. No country in Europe possesses so large an area of fresh-water lakes, in proportion to its size, as Ireland. *Lough Neagh*, in the province of Ulster, is one of the three largest in Europe, and has an area of over 90,000 acres. The other principal lakes are the Corrib, Erne, Allen, Ree, Derg, Muck, and Killarney. The last named, situated in the mountains of Kerry, are three in number, an Upper, Lower, and Middle Lake, covering an area of about 6,000 acres, and are highly celebrated for their picturesque scenery.

**O. E. M.**—In cases of jaundice the diet should be plain, wholesome, and nutritious. In their season, fresh vegetables and ripe fruit should be partaken of freely. Cold water should be the principal drink; or drink and medicine may be combined in the shape of five drops of muriatic acid and three drops of nitric acid, dissolved in a tumbler of water slightly sweetened. The acid sponge bath, made by mixing three parts of muriatic acid with two parts of nitric acid, and adding as much of this mixture to water as will make it about as sour as weak vinegar, is valuable in jaundice. A quart of water in a basin will suffice. When applied with the sponge, the solution, if of the right strength, will produce a slight tingling of the skin.

**A. B. D.**—Oxford University, Oxford, England, is said to have been founded by King Alfred. Even though this claim is disputable, it is certain that from very early times students resorted to Oxford in order to attend lectures delivered there by learned men, and that they lodged in the houses of the inhabitants of that town. The colleges were founded at various periods, from the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth—fourteen out of the twenty springing into existence before the Reformation. The colleges and halls, as they rank in the University, are: University, Balliol, Merton, Exeter, Oriel, Queen's, New College, Lincoln, All Souls, Magdalen, Brasenose, Corpus Christi, Christ Church, Trinity, St. John's, Jesus, Wadham, Pembroke, Worcester, Keble, St. Mary Hall, Magdalen Hall, New Inn Hall, St. Alban Hall, and St. Edmund Hall.

**H. E. A.**—To reduce one's weight, the following dietary is recommended: For breakfast, four ounces of beef, mutton, or any kind of broiled fish or cold meat, except pork, salmon, eels, and herring. A cup of tea without milk or sugar, a little hard biscuit, or an ounce of dry toast. For dinner, five or six ounces of any fish or meat (except those prohibited), any vegetable (except potatoes, parsnips, and beets), one ounce of dry toast, ripe and cooked fruits, and any kind of poultry or game. For tea, two or three ounces of fruit, dry toast, and a cup of tea without milk or sugar. Food which contains sugar and starch in large proportions, in many persons creates fat quite rapidly, and should be studiously avoided by all who are inclined to corpulence or obesity. There is no specific that will achieve the result you wish. Try the dietary we have given and note its effect.

**G. W.**—1. The carbuncle is a beautiful stone of a deep red colour, with a mixture of scarlet, called by the Greeks *anthrax*. It is found in the East Indies. It is usually discovered pure of an angular figure. Its ordinary size is one-fourth to two-thirds of an inch. When held up to the sun, it loses its deep tinge, and becomes exactly of the colour of a burning coal. 2. The heliotrope is a variety of chalcodony (found in Asia Minor) of a deep-green colour, variegated with blood-red or yellowish spots. 3. The jacinth, or hyacinth, is a red variety of silex, sometimes used as a gem. It is found in Ceylon. 4. The iris is only seen in antique jewels. It is a very limpid and very transparent quartz. It is crystalline, a fact which immediately distinguishes it from the opal. It was found by the Red Sea. 5. The chrysolite is of a yellowish or greenish colour. 6. The obsidian is a yellowish stone—a variety of agate. 7. We cannot enlighten you. 8. A license is necessary.

**W. H.**—1. There can be nothing but praise given for the penmanship and grammar displayed in your communication. 2. Light brown hair.

**P. M. M.**—The swelling caused by the stings of hornets, wasps, bees, and spiders, may be generally arrested by the application of common salt and bicarbonate of soda (a teaspoonful of each) dissolved in warm water, and well rubbed in on the place bitten or stung.

**E. F. R.**—Queen Victoria reigns in her own right, holding the crown both by inheritance and election. Her legal title rests on the statute by which the succession to the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland was settled, on the death of King William and Queen Anne, without issue, on the Princess Sophia of Hanover, and the "heirs of her body, being Protestants." The inheritance thus limited descended to George I., son and heir of Princess Sophia, she having died before Queen Anne; and it has ever since continued in a regular course of descent.

**B. T. R.**—1. A lady should never lay aside her bonnet or wraps during a formal call, even though urged to do so. If the call be a friendly and unceremonious one, she may do so if she thinks proper, though never without an invitation. 2. In making a formal visit a gentleman should retain his hat and gloves in his hand on entering the room. The hat should not be laid upon a table or stand, but kept in the hand, unless it is found necessary from some cause to set it down. In an informal call the hat, gloves, overcoat and cane may all be left in the hall, but it would be decidedly impolite to ask or expect the lady to hand them to the visitor upon his retiring.

## HAVE SOMETHING PLEASANT TO SAY.

If a neighbour comes in  
With a sad, sorry face,  
The sunshine gone out of his day,  
Then lift up the blind  
That the light may shine in,  
And have something pleasant to say.

There is nothing so sweet  
As a few kindly words,  
Be they ever so poorly expressed—  
A smile that's sincere,  
A tear of regret,  
To the heart that is sorely distressed.

When the good man comes in,  
Leaving labour behind,  
Oh! meet him, fond heartiest, half way;  
Remember his home!  
Is his haven of rest,  
And have something pleasant to say.

The words may be simple  
That give mother joy;  
And free from all musical art;  
But ah! she can tell,  
With her well-attuned ear,  
That they came from the depths of the heart.

Around the home table  
How charming to hear  
Sweet converse go on day by day,  
Each one taking part  
In the subjects discussed,  
Having something that's pleasant to say.

Golden speech! pleasant words!  
All so blessed to hear,  
That an angel might bear them above—  
So tender and true—  
Like the sun and the dew,  
They will bring forth the blossoms of love.

M. K.

**M. T.**—1. Astronomers divide stars into classes according to their brightness; the brightest being of the first magnitude. Those of the sixth magnitude give so faint a light that it is difficult to see them without a telescope. 2. Of stars visible to the naked eye only the brightest show recognizable colour. Some are ruddy, some yellow, and many brilliantly white. With the aid of a telescope more marked instances occur, some stars being blood-red, garnet-coloured, rich orange, and golden yellow. A few stars show such colour as blue, green, violet, and indigo. 3. The Milky way, so called, is made up of countless numbers of small stars. They appear to be close together, so close that they present the appearance of a mass of light instead of separate stars. 4. The astronomical telescope is made up chiefly of a lens, or round glass, called an object-glass, which forms an image of the distant object, and of an eye-glass which magnifies or enlarges this image.

**J. M.**—Fruit sauce, which is served with meats, is made of apples, peaches and apples mixed, and of cranberries. The apples are either stewed or baked, and then mashed through a colander. First pare them, and remove the seeds. To one pint, add one tablespoonful of butter, and half a pound of sugar. Acid apples are the best. If made of dried apples and peaches, take equal quantities of each; soak them for six hours, and then stew them; sweeten to taste, and add a little lemon to give them an acid taste. Cranberries are first washed and picked, and then put on to stew with enough water to cover them. Let them stew until the skins crack, and they begin to thicken; sweeten them to taste, and let them get cold. They are better if made into a jelly, and you can make them jelly if you put the berries to stew with enough water to cover them. When the skins crack, strain them; add to each pint of juice, put one pound of brown sugar; let it cook until it jellies; then put it into china moulds to cool.

**C. S. W.**—1. The flute is a very difficult instrument on which to learn to play well. 2. A teacher is almost always indispensable. 3. Your penmanship is elegant.

**M. V. W.**—The Hebrews and Greeks used the first nine letters of their alphabet for the numbers 1 to 9; the next nine letters for 10, 20, &c., to 90; and the others for hundreds; while for thousands they recommenced the alphabet and added to each letter a mark or iota. The Romans followed a similar system, beyond which we cannot enlighten you.

**F. T. L.**—The black spots on the nose or other parts of the face are not always what are called freckles. What are mistaken for them are produced in this way: The skin may be coarse, and the ducts being large, collect the perspiration, which hardens and blackens, and hence the common supposition of there being pores or maggots in the skin. The remedy is simple. Clean the part affected by pressing out the substance that is lodged there, and then apply a little diluted Cologne water several times a day, until the blotches have disappeared.

**R. H. M.**—Orsini, the Italian revolutionist, who went to Paris in 1837 to assassinate Napoleon III, had three associates, named Pieri, Rudio, and Gomez. On the evening of Jan. 14, 1838, as the emperor and empress were approaching the Grand Opera, three bombs were thrown under their carriage and exploded, killing or wounding a large number of persons, though the intended victims escaped. Orsini, Pieri, and Rudio were sentenced to death, and Gomez to hard labour for life. The sentence in regard to Orsini and Pieri was carried out, but the life of Rudio was spared through the intercession of the Empress Eugenie.

**P. M. W.**—Chloride of sodium (salt) is present in the blood in the proportion of four and a half parts per thousand; and phosphate of lime exists in the bones and other solid tissues in much greater proportion. Both these substances are also ingredients of the food. Chloride of sodium is found in muscular flesh, or lean meat, in the proportion of two parts per thousand, and we are also in the habit of adding it to the food as a condiment. Breeders of sheep, cattle, and horses always find that a liberal supply of common salt improves greatly the condition of the animals. Phosphate of lime exists in the muscular flesh of animals, in fish, oysters, eggs, in the cereal grains, in peas, beans, potatoes, beets, turnips, etc., and even in most of the juicy fruits.

**E. D. K.**—Castile soap, used once a day, with frequent brushings with pure water and a soft brush, cannot fail to keep the teeth clean and white, unless they are disfigured and destroyed by the use of tobacco, or too hot or too cold drinks. On the slightest appearance of decay, or a tendency to accumulate tartar, immediately consult a dentist, for if a dark spot appearing under the enamel is neglected, it will eat in until the tooth is eventually ruined. The only remedy is to have the decayed portion removed, and the cavity properly plugged. The constant use of tooth-powders and washes will be sure to destroy the enamel, and consequently such a medium should not be employed more than once a week, and then very sparingly.

**H. C. C.**—The distinction of being a remnant of the Tower of Babel has been claimed for three different maces:—1st, for Nimrod's Tower, at Akkerkul; second, the Muj Libe, 950 yards east of the Euphrates and five miles above the modern town of Hillah; third, the Birs Nimrod, to the west of that river and about six miles to the south-west of Hillah—the whole situated in Babylonia. The last of these has the majority of opinions in its favour. It is an oblong structure with a total circumference of 762 yards. At the eastern side it is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more than 50 or 60 feet in height; but on the western side it rises in a conical figure to an elevation of 198 feet. On its summit is a solid pile of brick 37 feet high and 23 feet broad, diminishing in thickness to the top, which is broken and irregular and divided by a large fissure, extending through a third of its height, and perforated by small square holes. These ruins stand on a prodigious mound, the whole of which is itself in ruins, channelled by the weather and strewed with fragments of black stone, sandstone, and marble. In regard to its original dimensions, ancient historians are authority for the statement that it was a square structure, built in the form of a pyramid, each side of which measured one-eighth of a mile at its base, and reaching a height of 900 feet.

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